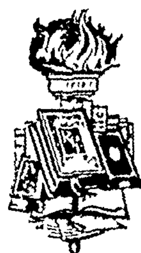
NATIONALISM
AND
SOCIAL REFORM IN INDIA

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SOCIAL REFORM IN INDIA

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To My Elder Brother

Who is no more

PREFACE

This study is an attempt to examine the nature of nationa-ism and the movement for social reform, and the interrelation of the two, during the period 1885-1920 It has often been asser-ed, as by Valentine Chirol in 'Indian Unrest,' and by Dufferin and Auckland Colvin, that the new nationalism in India was socially a reactionary resurgence, and that, as such, it retarded the movement for social reform, My studies, however, have led me to the conclusion that the new spirit, as expressed in the Indian National movement of the period, was not socially reactionary, it aimed rather at doing away with the inferiority complex from which the Indian intelligentsia had been suffering on account of its passive acceptance of the alleged superiority of European culture. This movement was, to a large extent perhaps, a protest against the overbearing nature and tone of condescension, as displayed by the Christian missionaries. It was, in fact, the re-assertion of the spirit of India

Ram Krishna Paramahansa and Vivekananda, the Theoso-phical Society, and Dayananda prepared the ideological back-ground against which the political movement, led and represented by the Tilak school, flourished The new spirit was also reflected in the social reform movement. Just as there were two trends in the national movement, the liberal and the extremist, so also there were two currents in the social reform movement, one represented by the Ranade school, and the other represented by the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, and other religious reform movements. Not that the latter were not radical reformers, but that they wanted far-reach-ing reforms in keeping with the national spirit of India. They went in for no blind imitation of the West; nor were they for clinging to everything Indian. They wanted to steer clear of he dangerous course of over-Westernisation on the one hand, and the pursuit of blind superstition on the other.

The revival of the national spirit of the age is often misunderstood as that of Hindu orthodoxy This is far from the truth As a matter of fact Hindu orthodoxy had been active ever since the beginning of the protestant movement early in the 19th century From its very inception the Brahmo Samaj had to face social ostracism and persecution So the revival during the last quarter of the 19th century as manifested in the Arya Samaj Theosophical Society and Ram Krishna Mission was not the restoration of Hindu orthodoxy but rather a strong re affirmation of India s spirit and her claim to nationhood spiritually

The year 1885 has been taken as the starting point of this work because it was in that year that the Indian National Congress had its birth It was also about this time that B M Malabari submitted his notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India Only two years after the National Social Conference came into existence as an adjunct of the Congress The narrative ends with the advent of Gandhi for in him the diverse trends of our nationalism and social reform were harmonised He was at once an ardent nationalist and a radical social reformer He was the political disciple of Gokhale at the same time he had something of the spirit of Tilak On the social plane also he may be regarded as the successor of Mala bari and Ranade on the one hand and of Dayananda Viveka nanda and Annie Besant on the other

In the first chapter of this work the background to the period of my study has been surveyed It has been shown there in that both the social reform movement and liberal nationalism were the obverse and reverse sides of the Indian Renaissance which aimed at an overall regeneration of our country The role of Ranade in furthering the cause social and political of his motherland has been briefly reviewed in the second chapter The third chapter deals with the Hindu revival and brings out the point that the same was in no way reactionary Here special stress has been laid on the role of Vivekananda in the movement for regeneration Though it has been called Hindu

revival, its outlook was not sectarian, but pronouncedly national. The next chapter deals with the controversy that raged at that time as to whether priority should be given to social reform or to political emancipation. The fifth chapter is devoted to showing how nationalism and passion for social reform developed side by side, and how the character of the one influenced the nature of the other. In the following chapter the agencies of social reform have been described and discussed

In the succeeding four chapters (VII, VIII, IX and X), a survey has been made of the progress registered in the varied spheres of education and uplift of women, marriage, elevation of the downtrodden and the changes in social outlook. These are illustrations to show how the period (1885-1920) was momentous and eventful not only from the viewpoint of the nationalist movement, but also from that of movement, for social reform

In the eleventh chapter I have reviewed the social philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi; and have arrived at the conclusion that his ideas regarding female education, uplift of the downtrodden, marriage, and purity and socialism were no novelties, as most of them had been present in the teachings of Dayananda and Vivekananda.

Lastly I have concluded that nationalism and social reform were interdependent, the one accelerating, and not retarding, the pace of the other This fact was fully realised by Mahatma Gandhi.

I owe an apology for not having dealt with the Muslims separately This is for the simple reason that the awakening among the Muslims occurred quite outside the main current of Indian nationalism. While the revivalist movement among the Hindus was all-inclusive and all-absorbing, the same among the Muslims was exclusive and separatist Though Sir Syed Ahmed denounced the Congress as a Hindu organisation, the Congress had among its first seven Presidents, the first an Indian Christian, the second and sixth Parsis, the third a Muslim, the fourth and fifth Englishmen, and only at the seventh session, a Hindu

presided over the Congress for the first time This character of the Congress was retained to the last The revivalists also and especially Vivekananda wanted to include all within the all embracing arm of the Vedanta each following his own path to salvation This was quite in conformity with the cosmopolitan character of our nationalism as emphasized later on by Gandhi

The work is based on a variety of sources—the Reports of the National Social Conference of the Indian National Congress the Statements on the Moral and Material Progress of India Reports on the Census of India the contemporary newspapers *magazines and periodicals the memoirs speeches and writings* of the principal actors in the drama and other related works

While preparing this thesis I have received very valuable help from Dr K K Datta now Vice Chancellor of Magadh University who suggested to me the subject and encouraged me while it was being investigated I have greatly profited by his suggestions I also owe a great deal to Dr H R Ghosal Professor of History at the University of Bihar, who went through most of the chapters and advised a few alterations which have been made I am however alone responsible for the views expressed and the conclusions arrived at I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my sense of gratitude to Dr R S Sharma Professor of History Patna University but for whose constant goading the work would not have been completed in time I am also grateful to the Librarians of the National Library Calcutta the Servants of India Society Library Poona the Sinha Library Patna the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Library Patna and Patna College Library for the courtesies shown and the facilities extended to me in course of my investigations

FOREWORD

In the history of mankind there are periods when the creative energy of a people unfolds itself and a leadership emerges which transforms the whole fabric of their life. The nineteenth century was one such epoch in the history of Indian people In every phase of community life were exhibited signs of change which shook the very foundations of existing traditions, prevailing customs and current social behaviour. Whether it was the shock of foreign domination which encompassed every aspect of social, political, cultural and economic structure of the community, or the self-conscious realisation of the ridiculousness and anachronism of customary society, it is difficult to be dogmatic about. But the impact of Western imperialism in all its magnitude and with all its corollaries was a tremendous influence generating consciousness of the urgency of reform. The alternative to change was annihilation, utter devastation of the edifice built over millenia. In the field of religion, Christian missionaries had taken to an implacable campaign of ridiculing the whole basis of Hindu, and even Muslim, dogmas and practices Social relationships depending on the principle of the sanctity of joint family, almost amounting to clan existence, were being rapidly corroded by the Western ideal of individualism. Men like Macaulay denied the value of the vast Indian literature and disdained cultural values. Neo-colonialism was destroying Indian economy, and politically the entire country was doomed to an existence of dependence and humiliation. The mightiest Indian was tiny before the humblest Englishman The shock of such a degradation roused sentiments of revolt and prepared the field for rehabilitation of social and cultural values and reassertion of the personality of India. In this environment developed the

keenness for reform, both in the social and political spheres A new pulsation was visible and every aspect of life of the community was rejuvenated A real renaissance was in action

Nationalism has been defined in the Oxford Dictionary as patriotic feeling principles or efforts policy of national independence In this meaning of the term will be comprehended all activities which are inspired by patriotic feeling and have as their object independence of the nation Patriotic feelings have to be distinguished from the sense of personal or sectional gain and will comprise every sentiment which embraces the welfare of the people as a whole Political independence is merely one aspect of the desire or energy for freedom from alien control which includes economic cultural social and religious freedom as well It is a pity that normally our vision gets restricted to political freedom when we think of independence or nationalism Hence many writers, under this confusion have rejected social and religious reform movements of the past or present century as inspired by the spirit of nationalism or as essential elements of the effort for independence The work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy Swami Dayanand Swami Vivekanand or even men like Ranade Malabari and others was as much nationalistic in its inspiration as that of the political leaders like Tilak Gokhale or Naoroji Social and religious reform literary revival or reactivisation of the sense of social and cultural values had prepared the ground ennobled the mind and fortified the spirit with the glow of patriotism which were essential pre requisites for the struggle of political freedom and cohesion of the people into a national unity The importance of social reform movements therefore is great in the preparation for independence Mahatma Gandhi realised their value and therefore integrated both political and social activity and brought independence to the country

Dr S a Ram Singh has discussed the efforts for social reform and has very ably narrated the story of such attempts from the time of Ram Mohan to Gandhi To him Gandhi s work is like the coping stone which completes the arch

"Gandhi thus stood for real swaraj not only in the political and economic sense, but also in the cultural sense". He further interprets Gandhi's emphasis on political freedom as essential preliminary to social and cultural progress. One may agree with Dr. Singh's conclusion that "Gandhi was impatient at that time for political emancipation, but he did so because he thought that there could be no social reconstruction without the achievement of freedom". In support of this view he has rightly quoted Mahatma Gandhi's statement that, "If as a member of a slave nation I could deliver the suppressed classes from their slavery without freeing myself from my own, I would do so today. But it is an impossible task. A slave has not the freedom even to do the right thing Hence though the panchama problem is as dear to me as life itself, I rest satisfied with exclusive attention to national non-cooperation. I feel sure the greater includes the less"

In the long tale of the struggle for freedom both political and social reform activities had their part to play. It may be that some leaders might have emphasised one while others laid stress on the other, but generally the consciousness of their mutual impact on the effort towards independence was present all the time. Dr. Singh therefore, rightly concludes that "Nationalism and the Social Reforms Movement went side by side, each reacting upon, and influencing the nature and character of the other" One was impossible without the other and for complete political independence, social and economic freedom of the individual is essential. Incompleteness in the social revolution has adversely affected the progress of our constitutional and political experiment after the advent of independence.

The reform movement in the nineteenth century was hastened by Western impact but its inspiration was indigenous, and it was but a continuation of the earlier reform movements which derived their inspiration from the essence of ancient Indian cultural traditions Abuses in the religious and social spheres at every time in the history of India have been sought

to be remedied by recourse to the purity of the teachings of Upanishads and the great treasure of our cultural heritage Dr Singh has very successfully interpreted the history of social reform movement and I congratulate him on his clear enunciation of its integration with nationalism which is commonly understood only in its political connotation

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations

App	Appendix
Census of India	Reports of the Census of India
Chandavarkar N G Speeches	Chandavarkar N G Speeches and Writings
H R	Hindustan Review
I L M	Indian Ladies Magazine
Int	Introduction
I S R	Indian Social Reformer
I S	Indian Spectator and the Voice of India
Malabari B M Infant Marriage	Malabari B M Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India
M R	Modern Review
Pal B C Memories	Pal B C Memories of My Life and Times
Ranade M G Miscellaneous	Ranade M G Miscellaneous Writings of Mr Justice Ranade
Ranade M G Essays	Ranade M G Religious and Social Reform—A Collection of Essays and Speeches
Report I N C	Report of the Proceedings of the Indian National Congress
Report N S C	Report of the Proceedings of the National Social Conference
Sastri Sivnath H B S	Sastri Sivnath History of the Brahmo Samaj
Swami Vivekananda Works	Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (Mayavati Memorial Edition)

ONE

THE BACKGROUND

The passion for all-round reform which had animated a host of medieval saint-reformers in India and many centuries earlier had inspired the Buddha and Mahabir to strive for the regeneration of man, manifested itself again in the nineteenth century, as a result mainly of the impact of Western culture. The forces working for the Renaissance in India about 1800 and onwards were chiefly : (1) the British Government ; (2) the Christian missionaries; and (3) the great Orientalists.[1] The effective interpenetration of India by the West, alike on the social and economic plane, may be said to have begun about 1800. And the intellectual awakening in India which was one of its primary results, and which in its turn was to produce far-reaching changes in Indian society, became distinctly visible shortly thereafter.[2] To this intellectual awakening the British Government contributed but indirectly, for down to 1813 it had in India admittedly followed a strict policy of neutrality in matters social and religious[3]. Indeed the criticism has been levelled against the Company's Government that it had even encouraged idolatrous tendencies by patronising the old places of worship, and by taking over the religious responsibilities of the former Hindu and Muslim rulers.[4] It was only after 1813, as a result of an agitation in England, that the Christian

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1 Farquhar, J. N , *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 5.
Farquhar says that Protestant Missions as shaped by the Serampore Missionaries and Duff were mainly responsible for it.

2. Ibid , p 1

3. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. VI. pp 121-22

4. Ibid , p 125.

missionaries were allowed some liberty to carry on religious propagation in British India[5]

The influx of new ideas from the West as such had a somewhat denationalising and unsettling influence upon young minds to begin with. Surendranath Banerjee's grandfather was a Kulin Brahmin very orthodox and punctual in the performance of daily duties. But he educated his eldest son Surendranath's father at the Hindu College[6] The English education of Surendranath's father dispelled from his mind the orthodox ideas fostered by his domestic tradition and environment. He belonged to a generation some of whom had sat at the feet of Derozio and like the first converts to a new cult their alienation from the faith of their fathers was complete and even militant[7] Peary Chand Mitter in his life of David Hare has shown how this group of young alumni of the Hindu College rejoiced in an open and ostentatious parade of defiance how they ate forbidden food, and threw the remnants into the houses of their orthodox neighbours[8]

Against this denationalising tendency Ram Mohan Roy vigorously protested. He stood for the assimilation of all that was best in the West but he was not to be swept off his feet. He started an agitation which aimed at the wholesale emancipation of man. According to the *Sind Observer* Karachi All modern reform movements educational social religious and political have emanated from him and all Indian reformers of the present day are spiritually his children[9] The social reforms for which Ram Mohan Roy stood were (a) eradication of Kulinism (b) stopping the sale of girls in marriage (c) abolition of the caste system (d) introduction of widow marriage[10]

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5 *Cambridge History of India* Vol VI p 1[illegible]4
6 Banerjee S N *A Nation in Making* p 1
7 Ibid p 2
8 Ibid p 2
9 *Sind Observer* Karachi Ram Mohan Centenary Number 27th September 1933
Ram Mohan Roy Centenary Commemoration Volume Part II p 330
10 Majumdar J K (Ed) *Raja Rammohan Roy and Progressive Movements in India* Introduction p 39

and (e) abolition of Sati. He also opposed polygamy and concubinage, and was the first caste Hindu in the modern age to cross the black water.[11] The abolition of Sati was, indeed, Ram Mohan's most important contribution to the cause of social reform, and with it modern Hindu social reform can be said to have started.[12]

It may be said as well that political agitation in India began with Ram Mohan. His study of English literature, history and parliamentary institutions made him acquainted with Western political ideas, and he introduced methods of political agitation by petitions, pamphlets, memorials, public meetings, and the Press.[13] In consonance with his liberal religious and social views, his nationalism was also liberal, and he believed that Indian nationalism could gain ground only when the nations of the Western world had become free.[14] He got up an agitation for the protection of the political interest of the people. He was a great lover of liberty, and to him liberty was indivisible, the enslavement of one section of humanity was incompatible with the liberty of another section. So he followed with intense interest the course of the French Revolution and is said to have given public dinner in the Town Hall of Calcutta as a mark of his joy at the establishment of Constitutional government in Spain[15] On his way to England, at the Cape of Good Hope, he, though seriously injured, insisted upon being carried to a French vessel where he saw the flag of liberty flying, to which he might pay his homage.[16] In 1832, he publicly declared that in case the objects of the Reform Bill were-

11 Zacharias, H C E, *Renascent India*, p 18.

12. Ibid p 18

13 The Father of Modern India. *Rammohan Roy Centenary Commemoration Volume* Part II, p 531.

14 Majumdar B *History of Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayanand* (1821-84) Vol I, Bengal, p 21

15. The Father of Modern India, *Rammohan Roy Centenary Commemoration Vol.*, Part II p 26

16 Ibid, p. 26

defeated he would give up his residence in the dominions of England and would settle down in America[17]

Social reform and nationalism were but two facets of the Renaissance that began to convulse Indian life from the beginning of the nineteenth century One can broadly agree with Zacharias[18] that movements for social reform and political emancipation were closely connected that it is impossible to understand Indian political aspirations and activities if one divorces them from that nation s great new spiritual urge towards Truth Justice and Love of which the one and the other alike are but outward manifestations This urge towards Truth Justice and Love expressed itself in almost all walks of life Ram Mohan was a true representative of the spirit of his age His movement had no anti Western bias He even stood for the colonisation[19] of India by Europeans because he thought it would lead to the improvement of industry and agriculture social progress and enlightenment improvement in the administration of justice prevention of abuse of power on the part of the authorities spread of English education and the cultivation of European arts and sciences better knowledge about India by England better defence system lasting relation between the two countries if England governed India on liberal lines and the exercise of a more civilising influence upon this country by the settlers even after separation from England Ram Mohan[20] was of the opinion that greater contact with Europeans would be conducive to real improvement in India s literary social and political conditions To this view the orthodox section was unalterably opposed and orthodox Hindus presented[21] in March 1823 a petition to Parliament against European colonisation in India stating therein that it would be detrimental to the interests alike of the zamindars and the

17 The Father of Modern India—*Rammohun Roy Centenary Commemoration* Vol Part II p 27
18 Zacharias H C E op cit p 1o
19 Majumdar J K (Ed) op cit pp 4 ~ 460
20 Ibid p 439
21 Ibid p 432 33

ryots.

The colonisation scheme ultimately failed owing to the opposition of the orthodox elements in India and the Conservatives in England. The movement for social reform nevertheless went apace. The reformers in the beginning worked in scattered isolation. They had, however, the advantage that the reactionaries were far from united.[22]

Women's education received the approval of the Calcutta School Society, but in its view time was not ripe for setting up girls' schools When an English woman, Miss Marry Anne Cooke came out as a teacher to India to train Indian women both as teachers and pupils, she had to offer her services to the Church Missionary Society. The innate prejudice of Indians against girls' education, and particularly against girls being taught by a European Christian woman was a great impediment in her way. When all her persuasions, presents and inducements failed, she confined herself to teaching Christian girls.[23] In 1824, there were 24 schools with 400 pupils under her charge. The Christian Missionary Society handed over the management and direction of these schools to a new organisation, the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education, which, however, could not make much of a headway since the education imparted was mostly religious and Christian.[24] It is rather surprising that the Ladies' Society succeeded in securing the warm support of Rajah Radhakant Deb, the recognised leader of the orthodox Hindus, who wrote and placed in the hands of its members, for publication and circulation, a Bengali tract for female education. Though the general public in Bengal did not take any interest in women's education, the emancipation of women from social bondage, which Ram Mohan had been advocating, found some ardent champions afterwards. Among them was Drinkwater Bethune,[25] Legal Member of the Governor-Gene-

22 Natarajan, S,, *A Century of Social Reform in India* p 11

23. Ibid , p 24 Also see *The Indian Awakening and Bengal* (by N.S Bose) pp. 143-144.

24. Natarajan ., S , op cit , p 44.

25. Pandit Sivnath Sastri in *East and West*, January, 1903, (I.S R. XIII, p. 177)

rals Council He threw himself heart and soul into the cause of female education in Bengal and received the warm approbation and support of men like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Madan Mohan Tarkabhushan Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee Ramgopal Ghose and others Vidyasagar became the first Secretary of the Hindu Balika Vidyalaya that Mr Bethune founded as the President of the Board of Education which later on developed into the Bethune College training young ladies in the higher branches of learning The school had to face great difficulty[26] in securing its first batch of students and parents who sent their daughters to this institution were subjected to persecution and even excommunication The establishment of the Hindu Balika Vidyalaya (later on called the Bethune Female School) in 1849 was however a landmark in the history of womens education in India Vidyasagar[27] when he was an Inspector of Schools with jurisdiction over several districts started a number of girls schools running them at his own expense Even then progress was rather painfully slow and even in 1860 the Bethune School had only 70 pupils on its rolls

Attempts for social betterment in Western India too owe mainly to the Christian missionaries The missionaries extended considerable encouragement to the education of Indians and to the revival of their literature The names of Dr Milson Dr Murry Mitchell Dr Pope Dr Kittael Dr Miller and Dr Murdoch will always be identified with movements that sought to raise the people[28] The Christian missionary was a powerful agent in bringing about religious and social awakening in Western India of which the school of Hindoo Protestantism of the latter half of the 19th Century was the fruit[29]

Hindu social reform under British rule commenced in the Bombay Presidency in the thirties of the 19th Century shortly

26 Natarajan S op cit p 44
27 Ibid p 43
28 Chandavarkar N G *Speeches* pp 43 44
29 Ibid p 44

after the introduction of English education[30]. The first social reformer of the modern age in Bombay was Bal Shastri Jambekar. He was the first Indian to be appointed Assistant Professor of English Literature in the Elphinstone Institution, the leading Government Arts College in Bombay. It was he who persuaded Jagannath Shankarset, the then leader of the Hindu community, to espouse the cause of Shri Prasad Sheshadri, who had informally embraced Christianity, but wanted to be taken back into his caste, as he had not eaten with Christians But the whole community was opposed to his being re-admitted. The opposition was led by Dhakjee Dadajee. Jambekar and Shankerset succeeded, however, in the young man's re-Hinduisation [31] English education helped the cause of reform in other ways too. In Bombay educated youths spread knowledge among the less fortunate. Young-men educated in the Elphinstone Institution conducted female schools, brought out publications for diffusing useful knowledge and delivered varnacular lectures in science [32] In 1840, a society based on the principle of free-masonry, was started by the first generation of educated Hindus for the abolition of caste [33] On the 13th June, 1848, was founded in Bombay the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, and under its auspices classes and schools were opened for the education of girls. They held weekly and monthly meetings, conducted in English

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30 At the Bombay Prov Social Conf. 1901, Ibid, p 93

31 Ibid , pp 93-94.

32 *Bombay Board of Education Report 1850-51*, quoted Ibid. pp 10-11

33 Ibid , p 11.* The Society was founded with 24 original members. Among them two were Englishmen, 13 Parsis (including Dadabhai Naroji), 5 Maharashtrians and two Gujratis The objects in founding the Society were "To foster healthy tone of mind by insisting that indolence and apathy lead only to moral suicide and by placing into a clear light the sure results of self-reliance, the steady progress of self-advancement and the golden crown of self-respect to hold forth the torch of hope and to kindle the flame of generous enthusiasm at the high altar of duty." (quoted in Jayakar. M R., *The Story of My Life* p 127)

and Vernacular and discussed mostly social questions such as the position of women and the means of raising their status[34] Essays on female education and early marriage excited the greatest amount of discussion Youngmen opened schools for girls and taught them They prepared books specially adapted for the purpose Since girls were married early and with drawn from schools at the age of ten or twelve steps were taken that they might be able to continue their studies even after leaving school These enthusiastic youngmen started a monthly periodical for their purpose They were encouraged in their work by their teachers and enlightened Hindu leaders such as Sir Mungaldas Nathubhai the Hon Jagannath Shanker set Mr Bhagwandas Purushottamdas and Dr Bhau Daji[35]

In the field of female education the Parsis were faring no better For the first time Framji Cawasjee Banajee gave his daughter the benefit of English education and his example was followed by Maneckjee Cursetjee and by Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy[36] When the Grant Medical College was first established Parsis were opposed to joining that college because the dissection of dead bodies was abhorrent to the Parsi religion In order to overcome their opposition separate rooms were provided near the Medical College where Parsi students might purify themselves after dissection[37] It was then that their opposition died down It is indeed surprising that prior to 1849 there was no arrangement even for the Vernacular education of Parsi girls outside their homes[38]

The Students Literary and Scientific Society however took up the matter at once The reading of an essay on female education at one of its meetings made youngmen seriously think of giving a practical shape to their ideas on the subject Morning classes for girls were organised where they gave gratuitous instructions by turn for nearly two years Then

34 Chandavarkar N G *Speeches* p 11
35 Ibid p 12
36 Ibid p 56
37 Ibid p 156
38 Ibid p 156

Mr. Cursetjee Nusserwanjee Cama established regular schools for girls[39] Chandavarkar narrates an incident in this connection. When Dadabhai Naoroji (later on the Grand Old Man of India) sought an interview with Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy in connection with female education, at the interview granted to him was invited also the conservative Dosabhoy Sorabjee Moonshee Dadabhai put his case before the two. When asked for his opinion, Moonshee said that one should not supply more oil to a lamp than it can contain. But Sir Jeejeebhoy turned the comparison to the advantage of Dadabhai, saying that the youngman wanted only as much instruction to girls as was necessary, and not more. Moderate education for girls was in fact the objective of the young enthusiasts.[40] Shortly after, Sir Jamsedji opened four schools for Parsi girls. These four, together with those opened by the Students' Society served to give an active start to female education in Bombay. The latter schools were taken up in 1856 by the Parsi Girls' School Association[41] The organisation of women's education was helped by Mr Framjee Nasserwanjee Patel, Mr Nowrojee Furdoonjee and Mr. Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee. The first two began as its Chairman, the other two as its secretaries. Nowrojee who was Secretary to the Association for nearly ten years, rendered great services to the cause of social reform among his people. In the midst of his various activities he devoted himself to the cause of female education with earnestness and vigour. Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee was his most valuable coadjutor. The two never behaved like rash reformers They consulted elderly persons and took them into confidence Whenever older people objected to certain details in the management of the schools, they submitted.[42] By the year 1885, the schools of the Parsi Girls' School Association were in a very prosperous condition, and 95% of the Parsi girls actually received

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39. Chandavarkar, N G., *Speeches*, p. 157.
40. Ibid , pp 157-58.
41. Ibid., p 158
42 Chandavarkar, N G , *Speeches*, p 159.

education[43] It is pertinent to observe here that the services rendered by the Cama family to the cause of social progress in general and to female education in particular are remarkable Cursetjee Nasserwanjee Cama and Dosabhoy Framjee Cama made liberal grants to girls Schools sometimes anonymously Dosabhoy it may be noted also gave a handsome amount to Karsandas Muljee who was engaged in promoting the cause of social reform among Gujrati Hindus[44]

The educated Parsis diffused knowledge through other media also They spread it by means of tracts and publications and through the press Mr Nowrojee Furdoonjee made the first effort when in 1840 he started a periodical in Gujrati called the Vidyasagar[45] Then came into existence the Jagatmitra a periodical in Gujrati started by Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee[46] Both papers dealt with matters of social and literary interest and diffused knowledge In 1851 the Dnyan Prasarak Mandali a vernacular branch of the Students Literary and Scientific Society began to publish essays in the shape of pamphlets read at its meeting[47] In 1857 Striboth (Instructor of Women) was started specially suited for females This again was due to Dosabhoy Framjee Cama s active sympathy for female education and advancement Mr Nanabhai Haridas

43 Ibid p 1 9

44 Ibid pp 160 161

45 Ibid p 161

46 Ibid pp 161 16? As a matter of fact the Students Scientific and Literary Society had by September 1849 two varnacular branches—(a) the Marathi Dnyan Prasarak Sabha for the benefit of Marathi speaking Hindus and (b) Gujrati Dnyan Prasarak Sabha for the Gujrati speaking Parsis The object was to *promote the diffusion* of knowledge among the uneducated masses by the reading and discussion of essays on literary historical and social subjects Subsequently a third Sabha was started called Buddhi Vardhak Hindu Sabha for Gujrati Hindus and under its auspices a school was *opened in June 1851 specially designed for the instruction* of Gujrati girls who were till then excluded from the influence of European civilisation and modes of thought (Jayakar M R *The Story of My Life* p 1[illegible])

47 Ibid p 16[illegible]

later on a Judge of the Bombay High Court, was for sometime its editor. It was a powerful organ of reform, and rising reformers of the time made regular contributions to the paper. There is no doubt that the Stribodh rendered a useful service to the cause of female education.[48]

It was, however, the Rast Goftar which gave real impetus to the social reform movement among the Parsis. Started by Dadabhai Naorojee in 1851, it supported liberal and enlightened ideas. After sometime it was edited by a relative of Dadabhai, and then conducted by Jehangir Burjorjee Vacha. In 1858, he was succeeded by Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee Later on, it was taken up by Karsandas Muljee and Mr. Jehangir Burjorjee Vacha. They were succeeded by K. N. Kabraljee, who was editor in 1885.[49]

The Parsi Law Association and the Rahnamae Mazdiashna (Religious Reform Association) helped the cause of social reform among the Parsis. The first was established on the 20th of August, 1855. Mr. Nowrojee Furdoonjee and Mr. S. S. Bengalee worked as the secretaries of the Association during the ten years it was in existence. Its aims were to secure uniform laws for the Parsis, with regard to inheritance and the marital contract, and to raise the legal status of Parsi women.[50] The Rahnamae Mazdiashna was started in 1853 by Nowrojee Furdoonjee and S. S Bengalee, with the former as President and the latter as Secretary. In spite of opposition from orthodox Parsis this organisation flourished and was a valuable instrument of religious reform among the Parsis It succeeded in reforming certain customs, especially those relating to marriage and death ceremonies.[51] Dadabhai Naorojee, in spite of his pre-occupations at the college, promoted the cause of social reform among the Parsis too Many institutions, such as the Students' Society, the Dnyan Prasarak, the Bombay Association, the Rahnamae Mazdiashna, the Irani Fund, the Kashrat

48 Ibid., p 162.
49. Ibid , pp 162-63
50. Ibid., 163
51, Ibid., p 164,

progressive elements. After this he advanced step by step, firm and majestic, celebrating one marriage after another, at times at a tremendous personal cost to himself[55] In 1864, a new force appeared in the field of social reform. Keshab Chandra had now come to the forefront as a great social and religious reformer. This year his party of young reformers took a very bold step in celebrating a marriage according to reformed theistic rules between persons of two different castes This drove the Brahmos into two antagonistic camps—the Conservatives and the Progressives. Among the latter, the number of widow marriages and intermarriages began to multiply to such an extent that the wind was partially taken out of the sail of Vidyasagar's movement, and the number of widow-remarriages according to Vidyasagar's orthodox mode of celebration began to decline.[56]

The Brahmo reformers went forward with their scheme of social reform in every walk of life. They strove to raise the limit of marriageable age of girls, to abolish polygamy and to give higher education and social liberty to women[57] Finally, they succeeded in getting a law passed, generally known as Act III of 1872. "The passing of this Act may be justly regarded as the crowning success of the prolonged efforts of the reformers for the amelioration of their (women's) social life. It abolished early marriage, made polygamy penal, sanctioned widow-marriages and intercaste marriages As such it was hailed with a shout of joy by the progressives, but ever since it has been one of the principal causes that have alienated the Brahmo from the sympathies of their orthodox countrymen."[58] How very much opposed public opinion was to social reform is best illustrated by the opposition which Sasipada Banerjee had to face in 1868, when he was to celebrate the marriage of his widow niece. Reactionary opposition resorted to kidnapping and assault The young widow and her mother had taken

55. Pt Sivnath Sastri, op. cit. (Reproduced in I S.R Vol. XIII, p 177)
56. Ibid
57 Ibid
58. Sastri, Pt Sivnath, H B S Vol. I, p. 251.

refuge at Barahnagar where Banerjee was living During his absence the girl was forcibly removed and the mother was forced to go back to the family home After 100 days Banerjee rescued them from Benares and to escape attention pressed on to Allahabad and then brought them back to Calcutta He was determined to get his niece married to a widower Brahmo colleague of his who was of a lower caste and he could perform the marriage ceremony only in the face of hostile demonstration[59] Popular prejudice against the Brahmo Samaj had been intense even before the Act of 1872 When Sasipada Banerjee established a school for girls in 1865 women from the neighbouring families also came to it But his openly joining the Brahmo Samaj discredited him in their eyes His students left him the pandit in charge of the school deserted him and the land lady drove Sasipada out of her house Nonetheless he started again with one pupil induced students to come with dolls and prizes every day and a year later he brought the number to 57 He also conducted Zenana classes until his new faith forced him to leave his family house Another girls school was opened by him in 1871 and in 1873 an institution for higher education for women was established in Ballygunge with which he was connected[60]

Attempts were made to popularize widow remarriage* in the Bombay Presidency by Vishnu Shastri Pandit a Deccani Brahman, who himself had married a widow He came forward to support the remarriage of Hindu widow according to the Shastras A debate took place at Poona in 1870 between those who were in favour of and those that were against widow remarriage with the Shankaracharya as the Chairman Verdict went against the reformers But nothing daunted Vishnu

59 Natarajan S op cit p 42

60 Ibid. p 43 *In Maharashtra a Widow Marriage Association was formed in 1861 It included influential and enlightened individuals like H.H Appasaheb Chief of Jamkhindi (its Chairman) Vishnu Shastri Pandit (Secretary) Justice Ranade (Deputy Chairman) Raghunath Rao of Vinchur Bal Mangesh Wagle K T Telang J S Gadgil R C Bhandarkar (members of its Managing Committee) (K. C. Vyas—*The Social Renaissance in India*—p 13)

Shastri and his followers and they carried on the campaign through the press and the platform.[61]

Crossing the 'black waters' was another taboo against which Hindu prejudice was very strong. It has already been noted that Ram Mohan was the first caste Hindu in the modern age to disregard this taboo Not to speak of crossing the sea, Gangadhar Dixit Phadke, a Marathi Brahman of Poona, who had gone over to Bombay and stayed there for six years, was on his return excommunicated by his castemen. It was only after administering penance that the Brahmins agreed to take him back into the caste. Even then many boycotted him. A great storm was raised when in 1840 the Parsi Manecjee Cursetjee during visit to Europe openly dined with Europeans.[63] Surendranath Banerjee's family had to face ostracism when he came back from England in 1871. To quote Banerjee himself,[63a] "It was a bold step for my mother and my brothers to have given me a place in a Brahmin family, and to have eaten and drunk and lived with me. My father was by no means orthodox in his ways and his transgressions against strict orthodoxy were numerous and grave, but a visit to England was not one of them. Forbidden food and drink he used to take with an ostentation that shocked my grandfather. But Hindu Society said nothing, winked at it, forgot and forgave."

But Hindu Society had not as yet been accustomed to the heterodoxy of a visit to England. Moreover, the Anglicised habits of some England-returned-persons added to the general alarm. The leaders applauded the courage of Banerjee's family in taking him back into the fold, but people in general were opposed. Though his family belonged to the highest rank of Brahmins, social intercourse with them was virtually cut off.[63b]

The practice of observing purdah on the part of Indian

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61. *Introduction to Ranade's Essays* p XVIII.

62 Chandavarkar, N G., op cit. pp 8-9

63 Ibid p 152

63 (a) Banerjee, S N. op cit., p. 23

63 (b) Ibid, p. 25.

ladies and the habit of drinking on the part of Indian gentlemen were some of the other social evils which stood in the way of the nation s progress Even the hyper westernized Parsis rigidly adhered to the purdah A very wealthy Parsi gentleman married a French lady in 1852 and soon after the marriage the couple began to drive together in a carriage and visit European shops in broad daylight—a thing unheard of among the Parsis The community made loud protests and the gentleman had to give up the practice [64] It was only in 1885 that some reformers could succeed in persuading some Hindu and Parsi gentlemen to come to a circus with their families [65] When Dhunjeebhoy Nusserwanjee Cama invited a few friends with their families to a private dinner, the news leaked out and a Parsi paper Chabook raised a great hue and cry condemning this practice [66]

The evil of drink was equally wide spread among the higher classes During the sixties and seventies a temperance movement began for protecting the younger generation from the pernicious influence of drink Some of the best men had fallen victims to the curse considering it an inseparable part of English culture A man who abstained from drink was regarded as rather ill educated although as Raj Narayan Bose has related in his autobiography drinking robbed the culture of all decorum and decency It was felt necessary to rescue Bengali youths from this vice and indeed a complete transformation of the habits of the educated community was the crying need of the hour The temperance movement started under the aegis of the Brahmo Samaj and Peary Churn Sircar was its pioneer [67] The movement had a fair measure of success Many were enthusiastic about it Meetings were held and speeches delivered against drinking Keshab Chandra Sen Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rev C H A Dall [68] were the active promoters of the movement And there is no doubt

64 [illegible] G [illegible] p 13
65 [illegible] p 13
66 [illegible] p 14[illegible]
67 [illegible]
68 [illegible]

that the tide of intemperance, which had assumed ominous proportions among the higher classes was checked. But not so with the lower ranks of the population.

For the sake of revenue, a system known as the outstill system had been introduced into the Hughli District. It cheapened the sale of country liquor and reduced its price by nearly one half This stimulated more consumption, and drunkenness spread among the lower classes of the rural population with alarming rapidity. Banerjee himself happened to visit a shop at Haripal, and what he saw there was much too shocking—half a dozen men and women lying dead drunk on the floor of the shop , another band of about a dozen men and women, all of the lower classes, in varying stages of drunkenness, starting to dance round him in wild and delirious excitement. Apprehensive of violence, he came out of the shop [69]

Of all the nineteenth-century Indian reformers, Keshab Chandra Sen was perhaps the most outstanding after Ram Mohan Roy. He started a Normal School for girls, an Industrial School for boys, the Victoria Institution for women, and the Bharat Ashram, a home in which a number of families were gathered together for cultivation of a better home-life, and for the education of women and children [70] Journalism was eagerly pursued by him The *Indian Mirror* became a daily paper, and the *Sulabh Samachar*, a Bengali weekly published at a farthing, began to appear regularly.

Reviewing the activities of Keshab Chandra Sen, one feels like agreeing with Pal[71] that the Brahmo Samaj, especially under Keshab, was the first to inaugurate an all India movement for religious and social reform, that the missionaries

69 Ibid , p 93 The incident may recall the days of Shri Chaitanya in Bengal We have it in *Chaitanya-Charitmrita* and *Chaitanya Bhagawata* that druken men and women openly indulged in debauchery in the streets of Nadia in broad daylight Jagai and Madhai were typical instances

70 Farquhar , J N , op cit p 49

71 Pal B C , *Memories of My Life and Times*. Vol II , Introduction, pp X-XI

of the Samaj carried their message of new religious and social freedom far and wide over the Indian continent In 1864 Keshab had been to Bombay and kindled the flame of religious enthusiasm there in the heart of the educated community In 1868 he extensively toured the N W Provinces (the present Uttar Pradesh) as a missionary delivering soul stirring addresses on social and religious reform The message of the Brahmo Samaj according to Pal[72] was personal liberty and social equality and emancipation Western education and British administration with their insistence on rationalism and individualism had at first created a sharp cleavage in Hindu social and religious life In the controversy that had ensued between orthodoxy and the reform movement the latter had the protection of British law No wonder that Keshab had made loyalty to the British Government an article of the creed of his Church[73]

Upto the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century at any rate the social reform movement was virtually confined to a section of Indians consisting generally of English educated men of the upper middle class though exceptions to it were not unknown The general people looked askance at all kinds of reform then and even for a long time afterwards This was but natural because to them every inroad on the age old social convention of India was outlandish People otherwise enlightened and well read in Indian literature recoiled from reform as though it were all impure importation of ideas foreign to the Indian soil In Eastern India however as Pal has noted a new nationalism was emerging from 1875 onwards as a result of the impact of modern European thought[74] This new nationalism at first expressed itself in Bengali literature Bankim Chandra was the prophet of this renaissance, and the *Bangadarshan* which he started in 1872 became the organ of this awakening A band of intellectuals, the finest products of the Calcutta University Dinabandhu Mitra the dramatist Hem

72 Ibid p XI
73 Ibid p XX
74 Pal B C op cit Vol I p 2 6

handra Banerjee, the poet, Raj Krishna Banerjee, the antiuarian, Akshaya Chandra Sarkar, Tara Prasad Chatterjee and handranath Basu, gathered round Bankim who was the centre f this movement. The English-educated Bengalis under the ıfluence of the Bankim school began to evince a new spirit of ıdependence and self-assertion, which was soon to provoke an ıtellectual civil war, not only in Bengal but throughout ndia.[75] The Revolt of 1857 had already accentuated raceatred, the conditions of life in this country had greatly changd, Europeans in India were now infused with the spirit of Disraelian neo-Imperialism, and the number of educated ndians had been growing fairly rapidly since the establishment of Universities in the three Presidency towns. As a result, the captivating influence of the West began to slacken; and reacion set in in the shape of a strong social and religious revival.[75a]

The revivalist spirit as such was no doubt susceptible to excesses, but it brought patriotism to the realities of Indian national life Slowly but steadily love for Europe was being replaced by love for India [76] About the unreality and foreignness of the older nationalism, Pal says, "Our patriotism was not composed of our love for our own history, our own literature, our own arts and industries, our own customs and institutions, nor even was it allied to any affection for the masses of our people even as they are. Their ignorance and their superstition, their dirt and squalor, all these actually repelled us. Our love for our people was something like the pious love of the Christian missionary for the heathens . . ."[77]

The growing estrangement between Europeans and the English-educated middle class Indian drove the latter more and more away from the former. The gulf between the classes and the masses now began to be bridged over. The hatred of

75 Ibid, pp 228-29

75 (a) For a fuller account of the racial conflict see my article "Indo-British Antagonism in the 19th century" in the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Agra, 1956.*

76 Pal, B. C, *The New Spirit.*, p 199

77 Ibid, p 200

an average Englishman against the Anglicised Indian was so great that writing in 1885 a British administrator observed "The more Anglicised a native is the more he is disliked by Englishmen The sense of jealousy becomes greater Whatever may be professed Englishmen are ready to encourage the natives who speak broken English those who are subject to Hindu prejudices more than those who have renounced them and generally those who are far removed from English habits of thought and life more than those who have made a very close approach to them They are more pleased with the backward Hindu than with his advanced compatriot because the former has made no attempt to attain equality with themselves"[78] Precisely at this time Keshab Chandra Sen proclaimed a new gospel of personal freedom and social equality which reacted very powerfully upon the growing national conciousness and the new political aspirations of young Bengal[79] The entire English educated community evinced great interest in the controversies Keshab carried on with the Christian missionaries and they felt a genuine pride in his victories over the missionaries which satisfied their national conceit They also felt flattered by Keshab's warm reception in England Anything which tended to give the Indian more self respect and greater national cohesion was clung to with enthusiasm One reason for this was that Indian nationalism was yet but nebulous Indian opinion was weak hardly vocal The pulsations of national life were not felt The great Indian continent consisted of innumerable units disintegrated without coherence or consistency without unity of purpose or aim speaking with different voices wrangling quarelling contending with their energies dissipated amid a conflict of views and Babel of tongues[80]

The Brahmo Samaj was not in a position to satisfy the new urge The Samaj had already played its part in stemming the tide of scepticism and materialism which were the dom

78 Cotton, H J S New India or India in Transition pp 40-41
79 Pal B C Memories of My Life and Times Vol I p 2?0
80 Banerjee S [illegible] p 40

nant note in the intellectual life of Young Bengal. Both Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen had fought strenuously against this scepticism and materialism.[81] By 1875 the Brahmo Samaj had begun to lose popular sympathies. Surendranath's political appeal gathered a much larger following than the sermons of the Brahmo Samaj Surendranath was largely attracted by the teachings of Mazzini and the Young Italy Movement,[82] his speeches incited much popular fervour.

India at this time exactly needed a movement which would prove her the equal of, if not superior to, Europe in the domain of culture. The conflict of political interest between the new generation of English-educated Indians and the British officialdom, and the cultural clash between Europe and India provoked something of a revolt against foreign domination, in the wake of which followed a new national consciousness. It was only natural So far Indians had accepted the cultural superiority of the West. Now they refused to take it for granted. They set up a new defence even of those social institutions and religious and spiritual tendencies that had formerly been openly discarded as false and harmful [83] Instead of apologizing for their current medieval ideas and institutions, and seeking to reform and reconstruct them after modern European ideas, they boldly stood up in defence of what they regarded as truly Indian.[84]

The Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society of India were best calculated to serve this purpose The revivalist cult echoed in the writings of Bankim Chandra, found a bold champion in Dayanand Saraswati. The founder of the Arya Samaj stood for 'India for the Indians.' The religion as well as the sovereignty of India was to belong to the Indian people. Through the spread of education and the removal of bad social customs, and above all, through the prevalence of true religion, the Indian people could be fit for self-government [85] So Indians

81 Pal, B C, *Memories*, Vol I, p. 235

82 Ibid, p 245

83. Ibid, p 424

84 Ibid, p 425

85 Griswold, quoted by Farquhar, J N, Op cit p 112.

were not to look to Europe for a higher social order or a purer religion These were to be found in the ancient scriptures of the people themselves The establishment of the Arya Samaj in 1875 was an event of great consequence and signified the success of the revivalist movement and the growth of national consciousness[86]

To educated Indians the Theosophical Society proved in some respects even more helpful The Brahmo Samaj had tried to bridge the gulf between modern European rationalism resulting from English education and the traditional life and institutions of the Indian people by practically accepting European rationalism and individualism as the gospel But not many people had the courage to follow the path of social reform in the face of bitter and cruel social ostracism to which the Brahmos were very often subjected Members of the Samaj in the earlier stage were not only denied association with their own family and caste they were even deprived of the services of the washerman and the barber to crown all their dead would not be touched and carried to the cremation ground by their neighbours[87] Theosophy came to these classes of people as a veritable gospel of peace and salvation It claimed much higher wisdom than that of modern rationalism offered an apology in defence of the prevailing Hindu customs and practices and thus effected a reconciliation between the conscience of the educated and the customs and traditions of their society[88] The greatest service rendered by the Theosophical movement was that it morally reclaimed many educated Hindus who readily accepted the rigid discipline of the new cult that demanded of them complete abstinence from intoxicating drinks and absolute social purity Theosophy also did not require them to repudiate the popular faith or revolt against current customs No doubt it proclaimed the universal brotherhood of man but that only as the final goal there was nothing illogical in observing the rules of caste

86 Pal B C. *Memories* Vol II Int pp XXXIX XL
87 Ibid pp XLI XLII
88 Ibid p XLII

or accepting the sacraments of popular Hinduism in the mean time. The Theosophists also accepted the worship of gods and goddesses and harmonised it with the fundamental unity of the Supreme Being[89] It was Theosophy which very materially helped to dispel that feeling of inferiority complex from which educated Indians had been suffering ever since their initiation into modern European culture through English schools and Universities.[90] The singular service rendered by the Theosophical Society was that it exalted ancient Indian wisdom, and proclaimed that India had yet a great purpose and a great mission for mankind[91]

Theosophists applied themselves to the moral regeneration, educational reclamation and social reconstruction of India. By the beginning of the 'eighties, Theosophical organisations were established in different parts of India. During the Christmas recess their leaders began to call annual conventions of their members The example set by the Theosophical Society encouraged politically-minded people to make the experiment of calling an Indian political congress to meet in important cities.[92] Thus against the background of growing disillusionment with the West, of mounting racial antagonism, of growing national consciousness, of revived Hinduism and a new Nation-Spirit, was founded the Indian National Congress in December 1885 , and it was followed by the establishment of the National Social Conference in 1887.[92a] According to K Subba Rao, Joint Editor of the Indian Social Reformer, the Indian National Congress "led to the formation of the National Social Conference."[93]

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89 Ibid , pp , XLIII-XLIV

90 Ibid p , XLIV.

91. Ibid , pp XLIV-XLV.

92. Ibid , p XLVIII.

92 (a) J N Farquhar has made an erroneous statement that the National Social Conference was founded in 1888. (Farquhar, Op. cit p 391) Dr P.C Ghosh commits the same mistake when she says that the National Social Conference met for the first time at Madras in 1888 (P C Ghosh, *Indian National Congress* p 65)

93 Subba Rao, K., *Revived Memories*, p 185

TWO

RANADE—THE PROPHET OF SOCIAL REFORM

The foundation in 1885 of the Indian National Congress marks an epoch in the history of modern India At its first meeting held in December of that year in Bombay social matters did find a place in discussion Mr W C Bonnerjee the President explained that one of the objects of the Congress would be ' the authoritative record of the matured opinions of the educated classes of India on some of the more important and pressing of the social questions of the day Dewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao and Rao Bahadur M G Ranade also delivered addresses on social reform But some people were of opinion that in view of the diversity of social arrangements in a vast country like India it would not be convenient to discuss social matters at the Congress So the social part of the programme of the Congress was abandoned at its Calcutta session in 1886 [1]

It was taken up however at the first meeting of the National Social Conference held in Madras in December 1887 The moving spirit behind the National Social Conference was Mahadev Govind Ranade One of the founder members of the Prarthna Samaj a devout theist a great scholar and an ardent social reformer he was according to Karve the Prophet of Liberated India Ranade had faith in the destiny of his nation I profess implicit faith in two articles of my creed he said This country of ours is the true land of promise This race of ours is the chosen race [2] But he found that man in India was

1 Pantulu K. Vireslingam I S R XIV p 233
2 Ranade M G *Miscellaneous writings of Mr Justice Ranade* pp 1?5-?6

fettered everywhere socially and politically. In order to liberate him it was necessary that religious superstitions be banished, social shackles broken and his political status raised. "The change which we should all seek !" he wrote, "is thus a change from constraint to freedom, from credulity to faith, from status to contract, from authority to reason, from unorganised to organised life, from bigotry to toleration, from blind fatalism to a sense of human dignity. This is what I understand by social evolution, both for individuals and societies in this country."[3] To this end he worked incessantly and indefatigably all his life. From 1887 to 1901, the year of his death, Ranade nursed the National Social Conference with care, faith and determination in the face of opposition and calumny. He had a fine sense of proportion, and would not ignore political reform for the sake of social progress At the same time he was not prepared to be complacent about social abuses and misery on the plea that he was pre-occupied with matters political[4] In this respect Ranade merits some comparison with Mahatma Gandhi, who always laid stress on constructive social programme as the background of his political action. There is also an important difference between the two in that whereas Ranade kept the two platforms separate, Gandhi combined them[5]

Ranade was a realist and a practical reformer. He perceived that the social reform movement during the previous half century had made little headway because of certain inherent defects in the reformers themselves. A genuine natural movement should spread to all classes, and touch all hearts, both men and women, Hindu and Mohamedan. But the weakness of the Samaj movements, the Prarthna Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, was that they had failed to stir the hearts of the nation, and their influence was operative only over a few souls brought up in a particular atmosphere[6]. In

3 Ibid , pp 116-17.

4 Karve., D. G Ranade—*The Prophet of Liberated India*, p 25.

5. Ibid , p 25

6. Ranade, M G , *Essays*, pp. 201-202,

contrast he emulated the example of the medieval saint-reformers whose teachings stirred the people at large[7]

The medieval reform movements of India had to struggle hard against orthodoxy and priestly conservatism They succeeded largely in breaking down the monopoly of Sanskrit learning dispelling the charm of the Yogic system of working wonders and breaking the barriers of caste Barbers cobblers and butchers women and Mohamedans were accorded hearty welcome by those reformers and some of them became included among saints The medieval reformers revolted against cruelty and impurity animal and human sacrifices worship of cruel deities and the performance of abhorrent Tantric rites and also raised their voice against polytheism[8]

It was Ranade s greatest service to the reform movement that he brought it as far as possible in line with the tradition of the medieval reform movement of India and thus made it look more national than the Samaj movement He urged that modern Prostestantism should be only a continuation of medieval Prostestantism The movement was older than Modern India The Protestant tradition was as old as Buddhism itself It was not confined to the English educated classes in the towns Its roots lay deep in Indian history and for a proper appreciation of the tradition Indian history must be studied Then only could the reformers understand where they stood and whither they had to go[9] It was with this end in view that Ranade wanted to bring into existence an all India organisation which might give a definite shape to the social reform movement in the country The attempt to form an organisation of this kind may be traced back to the year 1884 when Mr A O Hume had conceived the idea of an annual Congress of Indian patriots to discuss social matters

At the first meeting of the National Social Conference in Madras it was resolved that among other things there was the necessity of holding annual national conferences in different

7 Ibid p 20
8 Ibid p 20
9 Ibid p 20

parts of the country to consider and adopt measures for the improvement of the social status of Indians and for the eradication of social abuses, that steps should be taken to organise and establish provincial sub-committees of the Conference; that among other social subjects which the Conference might take up those relating to the disabilities attendant on distant sea-voyages, the ruinous expenses of marriage, the limitation of age below which marriages should not take place, the remarriage of youthful widows, the evils of the marriages of young girls with old wretches, and the forms and evidences of marriages and intermarriages between sub-divisions of the same caste, should receive special attention. It was further resolved that the fundamental principles imposed on the members of the sub-committees should be binding under penalties agreed upon by them, and these principles should be carried out and enforced as regards the members who might agree to be bound by such penalties.[10]

Second National Social Conference met at Allahabad in 1888. Its principal work was to affiliate a large number of social reform associations and to appoint thirty-two persons as secretaries for the different circles in the different provinces of India. The Provincial Associations were to make every effort to check early marriages, extravagant expenditure on such occasions, enforced widowhood and the disabilities attendant on foreign travels beyond the sea, and to encourage intermarriages between castes which dined together.[11] At this Conference, Ranade delivered the first of his marvellous discourses on the social reform movement. He said that the Conference intended to strengthen the hands of the local associations, and to furnish information to each association, province or caste as to what was being done by others similarly situated (in the same province or other provinces or castes) and to stimulate active interest by mutual sympathy and co-operation He was of opinion that Indians were as strictly national socially, as they were politically. He admitted that there were great differences

10 Report, 3rd N S C, p 1

11, Ibid, p 2,

of opinion for purposes of immediate and practical reform yet there was a background of common tradition common religion common laws institutions and customs which made it possible for all to deliberate together in spite of the differences He observed that it would not be proper to forget the common background in dealing with those differences likewise it would be unwise to forget the differences because of the common background In his opinion it was the duty of the social reformers to eliminate the differences and correct the perversions which had sprung up and obscured the nobility of their common stock and ancient origin It was emphasised that the social evils from which India was suffering had been non existent in the past and in seeking their reforms Indians were not imitating any foreign models but restoring their ancient freedom and dignity in place of the present corruption [12]

Resolution III[13] passed at Allahabad laid down That the various Social Reform Associations Sabhas and caste Unions which may already be existing or may hereafter be formed in any part of India be asked to affiliate themselves to and to co operate with this Conference so far as their aims and objects are in common with the latter to send it copies of their proceedings and reports and to nominate delegates to take part in its annual meetings By the 4th Resolution [14] the following was recommended to the local units—(a) Formation of a social reform fund (b) employment of preachers (c) periodical lectures on social reform (d) formation of local or caste associations (e) publication and distribution of social reform literature both in English and Vernacular (f) registration of associations under section 26 of the Companies Act VI of 1882 (g) pledges by members against marrying their male or female relatives below a certain age as well as for educating all their female relations to the best of their ability and in case of breach to pay a prescribed penalty

12 Ibid p [illegible]
13 Ibid p [illegible]
14 Ibid p [illegible]

Ranade wanted to carry his country to the haven of freedom but he was no impatient reformer The evolution he sought was a change from constraint to freedom—constraint imposed by men s own weaker nature over the freedom of their higher powers He wanted a change from credulity to faith *from credulity* which behaves without grounds to faith which builds itself upon a firm foundation He held that though men are largely conditioned by circumstances [16a] and their station in life their duties and their limits of action are certainly fixed largely beyond their control there is a large margin left for freedom of action and this freedom they should fully utilise [17]

The urge for social reform according to Ranade was spontaneous and of indigenous origin That this feeling was genuine is proved by the fact that in inaugurating the new social regulations different methods of procedure were adopted by different States to accomplish the same end The method of direct legislation was followed in Mysore of caste initiation in Baroda and of executive regulation in Rajputana [18]

The result of such spontaneous action on the part of the rulers of Indian States would naturally encourage the foreign Government to take progressive measures Neither did Ranade want it nor the Government would like to meddle in social matters in the way it did when it put down sati and infanticide And yet the Government in its own cautious way was educating the people to a higher sense of their *responsibility*

16 a You may talk and act in a way that appears to be the result of your voluntary efforts but you are unconsciously influenced by the traditions in which you are born by the surroundings in which you are brought up by the very milk which you have drunk from your mother s breasts or influenced by those things in the world which you cannot disown To say that it is possible to build up a new fabric on new lines without any help from the past is to say that I am self born and my father and grandfather need not have troubled for me That is the way in which things strike me at least (Ranade M G *Miscellaneous* p 1 8)

17 Report th N S C pp 19 0

18 Report 8th N S C p 40

in this connection. By a formal notification it had abolished hookswinging, directly legislated for several backward classes, and regulated the marriage expenditure of the Kunbi and Rajputs and Jat population in several parts in the Bombay Presidency and in the North-Western Provinces.[19]

Ranade did not want to depend upon Government for social amelioration. He was in favour of utilising all methods to further the cause. According to him, there were four methods of making conscious efforts for reform. The first was the method of tradition, basing reform on the old texts, taking the old texts as the basis and to interpret them so as to suit the new requirements of the times. This was the method of Dr Bhandarkar, of the Arya Samaj and Swami Dayanand. This was a suitable method for dealing with the masses, and making them feel that there was the old continuity and that there was no attempt at innovation. The Social Conference followed this method in connection with the question of widow-remarriage. Another method was that of appealing to, and rousing the conscience of the people. A third method was that of enforcing reform by the means of penalties imposed either by the caste or by the State. The last was the method of cutting adrift from the rest, and forming a new camp. This fourth method was the most radical and unconventional. The Conference accepted the first three, rejecting the fourth one The cause of the Conference was the cause of the well being of the people even as the cause of the Congress was the cause of their country's progress.[20]

At the 9th National Social Conference[21], again, the different methods of social reform were discussed. The method of rebellion, i.e , going into another camp on religious grounds and building a new social structure based upon it did not receive Ranade's approbation But he was in favour of the caste organisations being utilised for the purpose of reform. To persuade the religious heads of different sects to bless the cause of social reform and to see to it that they were animated with a high

19. Report, 5th N S C., pp 20-21

20 Report, 5th N S C , pp 20-21.

21. Report, 9th N S.C , App p 6.

purpose and moved about the country and purified the people was another method which he supported It was hoped that if religious heads could take kindly to the reform movement popular opposition would melt away Then also appeals might be made to men s sense of honour and they might be convinced to pledge themselves to certain reforms The least eligible way was of course to seek legislative support To work out reforms on any of these lines it was considered necessary for the reformers to work together It was held essential for them to meet once a year and derive what lessons they could from each other and exchange mutual help and sympathy

Ranade looked to legislative help merely as the last resort but where indispensable he would not shrink from invoking State interference On the contrary his great Parsi contemporary Malabari laid main stress on State intervention Moved by the evil effects of infant marriage [22] such as enforced widowhood physical break down disease giving up of studies on the part of the boy husband the birth of sickly children poverty and dependence a disorganised household and over population Malabari had submitted in 1884 two notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India to prominent persons both official and non official protesting against the cruel customs and suggesting certain remedies for their eradication Malabari demanded from the State temporary aid and co operation , hoping that national conscience would be slowly awakened by the urgency of reform [23] Ranade held that Malabari had given an overdrawn picture[24] of the evils and in his reply he said [25] The legislature has done all that was necessary to legitimatize such marriages I have had some thing to do with the guidance of the remarriage movement in this Presidency and I feel confident that we have made good progress during the last fifteen years and more It is a very delicate subject *When the victim of cruelty welcomes the*

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22 Malabari B M *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India* pp 1 9

23 Ibid p 9

24 Ranade M G —*Essays* p 104

grace and effacement, it is not to be expected that startling results will be achieved soon. We are slowly touching the conscience of the people, disarming the opposition of the terror of excommunication and teaching the female sex to rebel or protest. These influences will be strengthened by our efforts to promote their higher education. Our people will not like any interference of the police or magistrate with such delicate matters."

Objections against the interference of the State in social matters were by no means flimsy First, social questions were none of the business of the State.[26] Ranade did not accept this argument. Social questions might sometimes lead to grave consequences. A community was not likely to prosper if its social abuses led to the misery of the individual. True, in matters social the State was not to intervene at every stage; but obnoxious inhuman and cruel customs were not to be tolerated. The second objection advanced was that social evils were not such as to warrant State action.[27] Ranade did not agree with this view-point. The enormity of the evils might have been exaggerated, but no body could deny the deplorable condition of widows and the evils emanating from infant marriage. The third argument was rather funny that the parties who suffered did not complain.[28] Ranade wondered how this plea could be put forth when those who suffered had neither any opportunity, nor the ability to give expression to their feelings. If they had been educated and taught to make decisions for themselves, there could be no doubt as to what their opinion would be. Fourthly, it was argued that assuming that State interference in social matters was justified, a foreign Government should not be allowed to interfere.[29] It is remarkable that such contentions were made not only by the apologists of the old order, but also by enlightened Englishmen who were sympathetic to Indian aspirations and knew India more

26. Ranade, M.G., *Essays*, p. 102.

27. Ibid , p. 104.

28. Ibid , p. 104.

29. Ibid., p. 105.

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22 Malabari B M *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India* pp 1 ?
23 Ibid p 9
24 Ranade M G —*Essays* p 104

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26. Ranade, M.G., *Essays*, p 102.

27. Ibid., p. 104.

28. Ibid., p. 104

29. Ibid., p. 105.

thoroughly through long associations Henry Cotton for example was of the view that the necessary changes must be brought about by the people themselves and should emerge from spontaneous impulse Any change brought about by an alien and benevolently despotic administration would be spasmodic and artificial and they could not be of permanent value because they were not spontaneous[30] He was firmly convinced that in order to be effective the social and moral regeneration of India must result from the action of internal forces Its tendencies must be moulded by the accumulated influences of the past and by the direct action of the present[31] He had very correctly assessed the Indian feeling in asserting that civilisation through a foreign Government the popularisation of Western ideas through official insistence a system of education through officials employed under the Department of Public Instruction must always fail that education was never to be in a healthy condition so long as the teaching of the home was at utter variance with the teaching of the school or the college because there was a bewildering contrast between the domestic environment of the young Hindu where his active life was spent and the intellectual atmosphere he breathed during his college hours[32] But Ranade would refute this argument by saying that if the foreign Government enacted some ameliorative social measures on the initiative of the people there was no question of interference by a foreign Government Interference on popular initiative in most urgent matters should be rather welcome People opposed to State interference argued further that institutions and customs must grow and must not be made to conform with foreign ideals to order[33] To this Ranade would reply that no reforms could be on foreign lines all reforms aimed at simply restoring the spirit of our old institutions adapted to the needs of the time The early celebration of

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30 Cotton H J S op cit p 144

31 Ibid p 144

32 Ibid p 145 Also cf Lord Ronaldshay—*The Heart of Aryavarta* and C F Andrews *The Renaissance in India*

33 Ranade M G *Essays* p 1[illegible]

child-marriages, the forcible disfigurement of widow, and the absolute prohibition of re-marriage in the higher castes, the occasional and local practices of polyandry and polygamy, are all admittedly corruptions of recent growth, unknown to the best days of our country's history."[34] "Internal dissensions, the upheaval of non-Aryan races,and the predominance acquired by barbarous Scythians and Mohamedan conquerors degraded the condition of the female sex, deprived them of their right of inheritance and freedom, and made woman dependent on man's caprice, instead of being his equal and honoured helpmate."[35]

To remove these evils, two methods had been suggested. There was the method of those who were for utilising all active and passive agencies likely to encourage and vitalize reform, others would follow the path of allowing things to take their own course.[36] Malabari wanted to follow the first path.[37] Ranade wanted to follow the middle course. He failed to understand why the Hindus should not avail of the agencies of the State for the amelioration of their social conditions when Parsis, Muslims, and Christians had no objection to State interference for the rectification of social wrongs. The Parsis through their panchayats secured the benefit of the Parsi Marriage Act, and their matrimonial courts with Parsi delegates to assist the judge. The Khojas had similar concessions for their community. The Nayars in Malabar got the benefit of an improved Marriage Law [38] Ranade had no patience with those who cried for the revival of the old institutions To him there was no sense in crying for the revival of old institutions. There was much in ancient India that could not be revived—eating of abominable food, certain strange marriage customs, certain other obnoxious things. But certainly the spirit of enquiry characteristic of

34. Ibid., p 94
35. Ibid , pp. 100-101.
36. Ibid., p. 101.
37. Ibid., p. 102.
38. Ibid , p. 106.

our Vedic fore fathers their fearlessness their love of nature their adventurous spirit were to be revived True reform consisted in the revival of the ancient Indian spirit The outward manifestations of the spirit must change from time to time and from country to country [39]

The social reform was an obligatory duty according to Ranade The reformer should infuse in him the light and warmth of nature which could be done only by purifying and improving himself and his surroundings He must exert his

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39 Ibid pp 169 1[illegible]

In the words of Ranade himself When we are asked to revive old institutions people are very vague as to the time that they have in view what shall we revive? Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our caste indulged in all the abominations as we now understand them of animal food and drink which exhausted every section of our country s Zoology and Botany? The men and the gods of those old days ate and drank forbidden things to excess in a way no revivalist will now venture to recommend Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons or eight forms of marriage which included capture and recognised mixed and illegitimate intercourse? Shall we revive the Niyoga system of procreating sons on our brother s wives when widowed? Shall we revive the old liberties taken by the Rishis and the wives of the Rishis with the marital tie Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year s end to year s end in which human beings were not spared as propitiatory offerings? Shall we revive the Shakti worship of the left hand with its indecencies and practical debaucheries Shall we revive the Sati and infanticide customs or the flinging of living men into the rivers or over rocks or hook swinging or the crushing beneath Jagannath Car? Shall we revive the internecine wars of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas or the cruel persecution and degradation of the aboriginal population? Shall we revive the custom of many husbands to one wife or of many wives to one husband Shall we require the Brahmins to cease to be landlords and gentlemen and turn into beggars and dependents upon the king as in old n days In a living organism [illegible] is no revival is possible The dead and the buried or burnt are dead buried and burnt once for all and the dead past cannot therefore be revived [illegible] of the old materials [illegible] life [illegible] [illegible]

best to remould his family, village, tribe and nation. Reform in the matter of infant marriage and enforced widowhood, in the matter of temperance and purity, inter-marriages between castes, and the re-admission of converts and the regulation and management of the religious endowments and charity, were reforms only to the extent they checked the influence of the old ideas and promoted the growth of the new tendencies.[40]

Ranade was opposed to the reactionary tendency regarding social laws as not the work of human hands, and of regarding them as coming from time immemorial. In his own words : "The dependent status of women, the customary limits of the age of marriage, the prohibition of marriage of widows in the higher castes, the exclusive confinement of marriage of one's own division of the sub-castes into which the country has been split up, the ignorance and seclusion of women, the appropriation of particular castes to particular professions, the prohibition of foreign travel, the inequalities made by the licence enjoyed by men and the abstentions enforced on women, the jealous isolation in matters of social intercourse as regards food and even touch, indiscriminate charity to certain castes—for all these and many other alienations from the old standards you cannot hold the old Law-givers responsible."[41]

Ranade wanted to avoid extremes. If he was no blind worshipper of the past, equally opposed was he to a violent break with the past. He believed in the process of growth, and he wanted to preserve the national type.[42] He stood for the emancipation of the whole man, and worked for his all-round development.[43] The secret of his character was his firm faith in God,[44] and his belief in the nobility of man. It was his faith in a divine purpose for India that made him stand square to the opposition which encountered him at every step in his work of reform He fought against caste prejudices, and against the impatience of his more impetuous co-workers. He

40 Ibid., p 178.
41. Ibid., p 285
42 Andrews, C F, *The Renaissance in India*, p 139,
43 Ibid., p 141.
44, Ibid., p 142,

faced all odds with courage determination and humility and forged a powerful instrument of social reform in the National Social Conference Year after year from 1887 till his death in 1901 he attended the meetings of the Conference co ordinated its work surveyed the progress registered by the social reform movement during the year encouraged follow workers and tried to avoid controversy as far as possible It was only in 1900 that illness prevented him from attending the Conference

Always unassuming he duly recognised and appreciated the work of others While addressing the session of the National Social Conference in 1898 he recounted the names of no fewer than two dozen heroes and martyrs of the social reform movement [45]

This large number of enthusiastic social reformers con firmed Ranade in his conviction that the social reform move ment was certain to succeed When multitudes of people in different parts of the country yearn for a change in their social surroundings and each in his own place seeks to work it out at a great sacrifice of his present interests it can hardly be but that those yearnings and struggles must bear fruit [46]

It seems Ranade believed in the inevitability of social reform But by it he did not mean that social reforms were to drop from heaven without any efforts Such a thing would be abhorrent to him He was opposed to indolence What he meant by the inevitability of social reform was that the social and economic conditions were gradually working towards

45 Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Pandit Vishnu Shastri Mr Karsandas Mulji Mr Madhavdas Raghunath Das Rao Bahadur Kolhatkar Dr R G Bhandarkar Pandit Vireslingam Pantulu Prof D K Karve Dr Jaising (Soul of the Shuddhi Sabha) Mr *Dwarika* das Ganguli Lala Devraj and Lala Munshiram of Jallandhar Lala Ruchiram of Lahore Gukuldas of Succur Dayaram Gidumal of Sindh Lal Shankar of Ahmedabad Mr Damodardas Goverdhan das Dr Atmaram Pandurang Babu Sasipada Banerjee and Rash Bihari Mukherjee Diwan Bahadur Raghunath Rao M R Venkat ratnam Vishnu Pant Mahajani and Lala Bajnath of North Wes tern Provinces

Ranade M G *Essays* pp 195 196

46 Ibid p 196

bringing about reforms. Hindu Society had sufficient elasticity to adapt itself to the changeed circumstances.[47]

Ranade's services to the cause of social reform were duly recognised by his countrymen, and the glowing tribute paid to him by his co-worker and successor in social reform, Justice N. G. Chandvarkar, cannot be improved upon.[48] "There were social reformers before him, but they were more or less content each to plough his own field along his own particular furrow, without much thought or knowledge, of what the others were doing. One man preached a crusade against caste in one part of the country, another advocated the re- marriage of young widows in another, a third strove to disseminate the light of education among women in a third. There was no touch, no sympathy, not even the knowledge of the fact that they were fellow-workers, among the early reformers. He did or tried his best to weed his little field of the shrubs and trees that had grown up in it unawares during the night of ages, and when his time came laid down his head and died where he had worked, not knowing whether there would be a harvest and whether anybody would be forthcoming to reap it up if there were one. Differences of subjects, differences of castes, differences of provinces and districts, differences of languages separated the workers from one another.

"The late Mr. Justice Ranade sympathised with all these movements, and in that sympathy he realised the great truth of the unity of them all, and it was the greatest work of his life that he laboured to give outward expression to this unity. The National Social Conference which he founded, and fostered with all a parents' care ..... was conceived and created by him as a visible embodiment of the unity of social reform "

Ranade was a worker in every field of progress "He had no exclusions to his love of progress, but he had his

47 Chandvarkar, N G *Speeches*, p 97,

48, Ibid , pp. 95-96,

preferences There is no gainsaying the fact that he had his greatest preference for social reform [49] And as has been already noted his principal work in connection with the social reform movement was that of organisation [50]

This emphasis on social work should not mislead one to the conclusion that Ranade was apathetic to the political aspirations of his people Far from it Surendra Nath Banerjee bears testimony to this when he says that Ranade was a constant figure on the Congress *platform as a visitor* and that he was the power behind the throne guiding advising and encouraging the Congress leaders in their work [51]

He was a statesman and no *mere politician* and always took a long range view of things He was convinced that the lasting regeneration of India could take place only if the internal obstacles which were not the results of the British occupation of India were removed Though intensely religious Ranade thought that too much pre occupation with matters religious to the exclusion of more secular matters was the first evil It indicated no scale of values different from that of the West but was only an index of an undeveloped national mind He worked to remove this psychological handicap The other malady from which Indian national life suffered and which engaged the attention of Ranade was the lack of the spirit of co-operation Unless this second evil was removed there was no hope of the success of any schemes of political reform It was the absence of this spirit of national cohesion that had brought the discomfiture of India at the hands of successive foreign invaders But the removal of these two internal obstacles alone was not sufficient In order to achieve orderly progress discipline in the true sense of the term was essential Success

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49 Ibid p 93
50 Ibid p 93
51 Banerjee S [illegible] p [illegible] B P Sitaramayya says that [illegible] Govind Ranade was a [illegible] in the Congress Within the [illegible] he could not be termed a Congress man but he was for years the [illegible] power behind the throne He furnished the [illegible] for the Congress [illegible] (*The History of the Indian National Congress* p 11)

in any walk of life could be achieved only through submission to 'disciplined authority'. In the words of Prof. Karve, "We had to conquer these before we set out to conquer our external conquerors. Fortunately the conquest over self-imposed obstacles was possible without outside sympathy or assistance. The inculcation of these three virtues, public spirit, national cohesion and political discipline, was for Ranade the very first step in a systematic reconstruction of the Indian polity."[52] It was for the inculcation of these virtues that Ranade had applied himself to the eradication of these social evils which, for centuries, had been undermining the very basis of Indian life, social as well as political.

Ranade proceeded very cautiously, and, eager to maintain unity among reformers and to avoid mutual bickerings, he was ready to make the greatest sacrifices without any consideration of personal prestige or party interest. Two instances from his life would illustrate this point. After a lecture at the Panch Houd Mission in Poona, tea and biscuits were served to the distinguished invitees by the Christian missionaries Ranade partook of them This literally raised the storm in a tea-pot. Orthodoxy took alarm and appealed to Shankaracharya, who appointed a Commission of two learned Brahmins to report on the matter Ranade, along with seven others, submitted a petition to the Commission showing their willingness to perform any act of purification. The petition was granted. This act on the part of Ranade raised a storm of protest against him. He tried to justify his action by saying that an act of purification did not necessarily mean repentance, rather it was a concession to the people's wish[53] This was a lame excuse; and the contradiction between progressive social view and a surrender to orthodoxy was obvious. But this shows Ranade's infinite capacity for compromise in the interest of social reform , and he bore the brunt of the attack of his own followers with equanimity.

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52. Karve, D G op cit p. 149.

53, Pradhan, G.P., *Bhagwat*, A.K. *Lokmanya Tilak*, pp 55-56,

Another episode is far more important When in 1895 objections were raised by the organisers of the Congress against the Social Conference being held in the Congress pandal Ranade addressed a letter to the Standing Congress Committee affirming that from 1885 onwards social matters had been discussed at the Congress pandal after its deliberations had been over that even in 1885 Rao Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao and he himself had delivered lectures which had been attended among others by Mr Hume Sir William Wedderburn Prof Dadabhai Mr W C Bonerji Mr Surendra Nath Banerji that this mutual good understanding had been maintained at subsequent gatherings and Congress Presidents and leading members such as the gentlemen named above Mr Anandа Charlu Raja Rampal Singh Pandit Malviya Babu Charu Chandra Mitra Mr Mudholkar Lala Murlidhar Mr Joshi and hundreds of other delegates had attended and taken part in the discussion in their private capacity [54]

The response from the Standing Committees was very favourable the proportion of favourable to unfavourable opinion being 2 to 1 and including those who advised concession that year the proportion of favourable to unfavourable opinion was 6 to 1 Province wise the Bombay replies were 13 of which 9 were favourable 2 sympathetic and 2 opposed the Madras replies were 9 of which 8 were favourable and one indifferent in North Western Provinces and Oudh out of 7 replies received six were favourable and only one opposed in the Punjab favourable opinions 3 unfavourable 2 even in conservative Bengal there were two Committees which distinctly favoured the Social Conference as many as 7 were sympathetic with the Conference while only 3 were opposed to the Conference and one was indifferent [55]

But despite the support of precedent and authoritative opinion Ranade gave up the attempt of holding the session of the Social Conference in the Congress pandal He did so [illegible] only in deference to the force of local opinion at Poona

54 [illegible] S C Appendix I 14
55 [illegible]

but more in the interest of larger issues—unity and avoidance of mutual bickerings. In S. N. Banerjee's words, "The raison d'etre of excluding social questions from our deliberations is that if we were to take up such questions it might lead to serious differences ultimately culminating in a schism, and it is a matter of the first importance that we should prevent a split. The request of the other party is very unreasonable, but we have sometimes to submit to unreasonable demands to avert greater evils."[56]

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56 Extract from a letter from S N. Banerjee to the organisers of the Social Conference Report, 9th N S C., App. p 2. Referring to the controversy in his presidential address, S N. Banerjee said, "In this connection I cannot help expressing my sense of admiration at the conciliatory attitude so strikingly displayed by Mr Justice Ranade, Secretary of the Social Conference, at a critical stage in the history of the controversy to which I have referred. It averted a crisis which might have proved disastrous to the best interests of the Congress The Congress owes a heavy debt of gratitude to Mr Justice Ranade." (*Congress Presidential Addresses* I, *From the foundation to the Silver Jubilee*, , p 182.)

THREE

The Hindu Revival

We have examined[1] the factors which led to the rise of a new spirit in India during the last quarter of the 19th Century Oriental study had flowered before 1870 after that year its fruit was plucked[2] and it reacted very powerfully on the Indian mind in various ways A new spirit was now visible among Hindu youths So far they had been docile pupils now they began to show the vigour and independence of youth The first college organised by Hindus was opened in Calcutta in 1879[3]

The one factor which was working very powerfully against Anglicising tendencies was the attitude of the Christian missionaries Before the last quarter of the nineteenth century Indian religious reform and revival had followed openly the line of Unitarian Christianity From the establishment of English Schools Colleges and Universities the educated intelligentsia of India generally and of Bengal particularly had been mostly under the influence of European thought and culture[4] In its social message the Brahmo Samaj had followed consciously or unconsciously the advanced social idealism of modern Europe and particularly of modern England But the Ilbert Bill controversy had undone all that Spokesmen of the

1 Cf Chap I

2 Farquhar J N op cit p °؛

3 Ibid p °6 It refers to the founding of the City College The schism in the Brahmo Samaj owing to the marriage of Keshab s daughter with the Maharaja of Cooch Behar led to the founding of the City College and other kindred institutions (S N Banerjee op cit p 35)

4 Pal, B C *Memories* Vol II Int p LIII

European community in India launched a violent attack against Hindu religious and social institutions.[5] They cited the institutions of Hindu castes, of child marriage and even the so-called idolatry of the Hindus as evidences of their moral inferiority to their European subjects, and thereby tried to prove that the Indians were unfit to sit in judgment upon a European accused[6] According to Pal,[7] "this violent and prejudiced attack on Hindu religious and social institutions, working upon the contrariness of human nature, drove the Hindus to stand up boldly in defence of institutions which they had at one time regarded as irrational and harmful and which they had been trying to reform. This was the psychological origin of the movement of social reaction and religious revival among the English-educated Hindus in the eighties of the last century." Caste was defended on the ground that it existed in Europe and on the ground of modern biology, child marriage on the ground that it led to social purity and domestic peace and happiness more than adult marriage familiar to European society, idolatry was also defended on rational grounds.[8]

It was only natural in the face of aggressive Christian missionary propaganda. Even a temperamentally mild man like Gandhi had developed a sort of dislike for Christianity in his boyhood, because near his school Christian missionaries would pour abuse on Hindus and their gods,[9] A Hindu convert to Christianity was supposed to be completely alienated not only from the religion of his fore-fathers but also from their society. He was popularly believed to have to eat beef and drink liquor, to put on European costume and a hat, and to abuse the religion of his ancestors, their customs and their country.[10] How scurrilously Christian missionary propaganda

5. Ibid , p LIV
6. Ibid , p. LV.
7. Ibid , p. LVI
8. Ibid , p. LVI-LVII
9. Gandhi, M.K —*My Experiments with Truth* p. 33.
10. Ibid , p. 34.

was carried on against Indian customs in general and Hinduism in particular can be gathered from the *Pice Paper on Indian* Reform Sanitary Social Moral and Religious [11] published by the Christian Literature Society of India It presented a very biased and lopsided picture of Hindu life and by contrast put forth the glorification of Christian life and ethics

It was also the firm conviction of Christian missionaries that everything good and noble in Indian Social and religious movements at the time was the *outcome of the impact of* Christianity Surveying the progress of religious movements in India in the 19th century Farquhar expressed the opinion that Christianity had made men feel that the only possible religion was monotheism that when this idea of the one spiritual God was held intelligently it necessarily excluded polytheism mythology idolatry and man worship that the Christian doctrine that God was the father of men and that every man was a child of God with its corollary that all men were brothers was accepted with practical unanimity in all the movements that the righteousness of God as taught by Jesus had also exercised a powerful influence that the reform movements had responded to the Christian ideals that the worship *of God must be spiritual that therefore animal and* vegetarian sacrifices ceremonial bathing pilgrimage and self torture ought to be given up that for the same reason worship ought to be conducted in the vernacular so that it might be understood by the people otherwise it had little or no value for them that the Christian doctrine of the person of Christ had been adopted in a modified form in a number of the movements that the most characteristic and vital of all the Hindu *doctrines that of transmigration* had been expelled completely from the teaching of the Brahmo and Prarthna Samajas and everywhere else it had been completely wounded that in all the movements was traceable a strong desire *that their leaders* should be like missionaries and their priests and teachers should be men of training of high moral character and spiri

11 *Pice Papers on Ind an R form etc 1897 London and Madras*

tual power, that the strongest proof that Christianity had ruled the whole religious development of the 19th century was to be found in the Social Reform Movement which had been impelled all through by Christian ideas of reform in the face of the deepest conceptions of Hindu Theology and social organisation and that the methods of work in almost all the movements had been borrowed from missions.[12]

Farquhar has, further, divided the religious movements in India into three groups—movements in favour of reform, movements in partial defence of the old faith, movements in full defence of the old faith. In the first category he puts the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthna Samaj, in the second the Arya Samaj, The Radha Soamis, the Deva Samaj and a few others, and in the third the Ramkrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society of India. He tries to show the last two to be thoroughly orthodox.

This is not, however, a correct estimate of the nature of the reform movements, especially of the latter ones. In view of the rise of the new spirit a strong reaction was only natural, but this reaction was in no way opposed to social reform and the revival of Hinduism was not accompanied with social reaction. Mr. Pal[13] perhaps gives a more correct appraisal of the situation when he says, "At the back of this reaction and revival there was undoubtedly a new national self-consciousness and a new pride of race which commenced to openly repudiate the pretensions of European thought and culture to superiority over Hindu thought and life. The social reaction and religious revival possessed the Hindu mind all over India, and offered an effective check, for a time, to our religious and social reform movements. It was not really an honest return to popular or current Hinduism. The motive force behind it was more a determination on the part of our people to assert themselves against the imposition of imported European

12 Farquhar, J N op cit pp 434 442 Also Cf O'Malley's '*Modern India and the West*' which has a strong Christian bias and attributes all progress in India to Christian Ethics and the West.

13. Pal, B.C. *Memories*, Vol II Int pp. LX-LXI.

thought and ideals on the one hand, as it was on the other an organised expression of the deep anti British feeling that had overcome every class and section of the educated community as a result of the open insult which the defenders of the class privilege in British Indian policy and administration had offered to their culture and character This spirit of self assertion and this growing anti British feeling materially changed the angle of our thoughts and activities in every department of life religious and social, no less political This was really the beginning of that conflict of cultures and national consciousness that have shaped and moulded in a very large and increasing extent the history and evolution of modern Indian thought and life

So there was a new attempt at synthesis In Bengal Sashadhar [13a] adopted a new line of interpretation whose aim was to find out a reconciliation between ancient Hindu ritualism and mediaeval faith on the one hand and modern science on the other [14] Akshay Chandra Sarkar was perhaps the most powerful opponent of progressive social views represented by the Brahmo Samaj and such advanced Hindu social reformers as Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Akshay Chandra Sarkar delivered an address in defence of the disabilities imposed by Hinduism upon young widows in regard to remarriage in 1884 before a distinguished gathering under the auspices of the Savitree Library presided over by Dr (later on Sir) Gurudas Banerjee [15]

Many other movements and individuals can be properly understood if two misconceptions regarding the revival of Hinduism are removed One is that the revival of Hinduism is often miscalled the revival of Hindu orthodoxy We shall see that the two are not the same The other is that Hindu

13 (a) Pandit Sashadhar Tarkachuramani defended every text and ceremony of orthodox Hinduism often without any trace of rationalistic approach or outlook He became very popular for some time but ultimately did not prove to be an important force

14 Pal B C *Memories* Vol I p 438

15 Pal B C *Memories* Vol I p 439

revivalism was socially reactionary. We shall see that it not only fostered national consciousness, but also widened the scope of social reform.

As a matter of fact orthodoxy had never been dormant in India throughout the 19th century When Raja Ram Mohan Roy tried to stop Sati by tracts and other methods of dissuasion, he was bitterly opposed by Raja Radhakanta Deb, the leader of the orthodox party, and the feelings aroused were so fierce that the reformer went about for a time in fear of his life and had to be protected by a guard.[16] When the Governor-General returned a reply to the petition of the anti abolitionists of *Sati*, they held a meeting at the Hindu College on the 17th July, 1830 The gentlemen decided to appeal to the authorities in England and twelve men[17] were chosen from the assembly to form a Committee for the purpose of holding meetings and discussing religious points. A fund of Rs. 11,260 was raised for expenditure and it was resolved that Hindus not following the rites of Hindu religion should be excluded from the Hindu society This was the beginning of the Dharma Sabha. To counter the propaganda of the *Sambad Kaumudi*, the organ of Ram Mohan, the orthodox party had its own paper, the *Samarchar Chandrika*. We have already had a glimpse of the persecution, reformers like Vidyasagar, Sasipada Banerjee and others had to suffer at the hands of orthodoxy [18]

During the fourth quarter of the 19th century when the reform movements became more organised and active,

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16 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol VI, p 110.

17 Majumdar, J K (Ed) op cit, p 173-174 The following 12 gentlemen were on the Committee
(Spelling as in the original)
1 Baboo Ram Gopal Mullic, 2 Gopee Mohan Deb, 3 Radha Kant Deb; 4. Tarini Churn Mitter, 5 Ram Comul Sen, 6. Hurry Mohan Tagore, 7 Kossinoth Mullic; 8 Moharaja Kollikissen Bahadoor, 9 Asootosh Sircar, 10 Gokoolnoth Mullic, 11 Byorohdor Mullic, 12. Neilmony Day, and 13 Bhowaneechurn Bonerjee. (Secretary)

18. See Chap. I.

orthodoxy was also better organised and more active In 1873 a group of Hindus in Calcutta formed the Sanatana Dharma Rakshini Sabha [19] The year 1884 was marked by a very strong wave of social reaction in Calcutta Pandit Sashdhar Tarkachuramani held many meetings in defence of popular Hindu ceremonialism and image worship and current Hindu social institutions [20] From 1885 onwards were the days of Congresses and conferences the National Congress the National Social Conference the Provincial Conferences and the District Conferences—and of men imbued with new ideas But the orthodox people also were busy in organising themselves The Hindu Dharma Mahamandal was formed in 1890 It was a Congress of Hindu religious leaders It started with crude ideas and unwise plan for work Its great defect was that it aimed at stifling liberty of thought in religion Orthodoxy was its motto and idolatry was the highest form of religion it aspired to Its second session was to be held at Patna or Benaras [20a] In 1895 Dindayal and a number of Pandits founded the Sanatan Dharma Sabha in Hardwar and Delhi In 1896 Swami Gyananandaji started in Mathura a movement called the Nigmagama Mandali In Bengal the Dharma Maha mandal arose In South India Pandit Sastriji Pade founded the Bharat Dharma Mahaparishad [21] By 1900 the movements had made so much progress that the first Conference of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was held at Delhi in August (1900) under the Presidency of the Maharaja of Darbhanga The Vedas were carried in a huge procession of about a lakh of people the Maharaja walking along with it bare footed to show his reverence About 700 Sabhas or associations were con nected with this movement In Kashmir the Maharaja took great interest in the movement In the Punjab Raj Pandit Suraj Caul and Mr Justice Chatterjee helped it In Udaipur H H the Maharana was the patron and his Dewan and

19 Farquhar J N op cit p 187
20 Pal B C *Memories* Vol I p 437
20(a) I S Vol XI p 333
21 Farquhar J N op cit p 316

private Secretary were the Secretaries of the Sabha At places of historical and religious importance, like Mathura and Brindaban, there were influential Committees at work.[22] A meeting of the Pandits of Kashi came off on the 10th December, 1905, with the object of preaching against the evils which had crept into the societies of the Hindus since the Social Conference had its birth. They denounced the social reform movement as an attempt to exterminate the Sanatan Dharma[22a] The Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha, held at Allahabad (April, 1906) passed resolutions regarding the improvement of Hindus, that (1) a Hindu University under the name 'Bhartiya Vishwavidyalaya' be established at Benaras (a) to train teachers of religion for the preservation and promotion of the Sanatan Dharma which is inculcated by the Srutis, Smritis, and Puranas and which recognises Varna and Ashrama , (b) to promote the study of the Sanskrit language and literature ; (c) and to advance and diffuse scientific and technical knowledge through the medium of Sanskrit and the Indian Vernaculars , that (2) the University would have (a) a Vedic College where the Vedas, Vedangas, Smritis, Darshanas, Itihasas and Puranas would be taught (an astronomical and meteorological observatory was to be attached to the Jyotish Section of this college), (b) an Ayurvedic (medical) college with laboratories and botanical gardens, a first class hospital and a veterinary department , (c) a college of Sthapatya Veda or Arthashastra, having three distinct departments *viz.* a department of Physics, theoretical and applied with laboratories for experiment and researches and workshops for the training of mechanical and electrical engineers etc etc , and that (3) (a) the Vedic College and all religious work of the University be under the control of Hindus who accept or follow the principles of the Sanatan Dharma as laid down in the Srutis, Smritis and Puranas ; (b) that admission to this college be regularised in accordance with the rules of the Varnashrama Dharma, (c) that all other colleges be open to

22. I S.R., Vol. X. p, 401.
22(a). I.S.R., Vol. XVI., p. 219.

students of all creeds and classes and the secular branches of Sanskrit learning be also taught without restriction of caste or creed A Committee composed of persons belonging to the Sanatan Dharma Sabha was appointed to give effect to the University scheme and the members of the Provisional Committee appointed at Benaras were requested to become members of that Committee [22]

In contrast with this Hindu orthodoxy all the schools of Hindu revivalism were in favour of social reform The Arya Samaj the Radha Soamis the Deva Samaj the Theosophical Society and the Rama Krishna Mission were all in favour of social reform in accordance with the light they had received Though Tilak was no religious leader he has been variously called the triumphant champion of Hindu orthodoxy [23] the high priest of Ganesh [24] and the inspired prophet of a new nationalism [25] According to Zacharias rowdyness entered Indian public life with Dayananda and Tilak only carried on the line laid down by him [26] The same writer speaks of Tilak s Hindu fascism[27] and also calls him an agnostic at heart [28]

These charges and allegations are mostly products of blind hatred and prejudice No doubt Dayananda was a militant nationalist and was always prepared to pay back the Christian missionaries in their own coins but he was as great an opponent of Hindu orthodoxy as of the denationalising faiths According to art VI of the creed of the Arya Samaj ' The primary object of the Samaj is to do good to the world by improving the physical spiritual and social condition of man kind So Dayananda wanted to convert the whole world to his faith His followers were ardent social reformers They invited both men and women to study the Vedas prohibited

22 (b) I S R XVI pp 41 13
23 Chirol V *The Indian Unrest* p 47
24 Ibid
25 Ibid
26 Zacharias H C E op cit p 30
27 Ibid p 33
28 Ibid p 31

child marriage and allowed virgin widows and widowers to remarry.[29] They had their women's Arya Samaj and they did a lot for the education of girls. The Arya Samaj was against caste, child-marriage, priestcraft, pilgrimage and self-torture in the name of religion. Similarly Sivanarayana Paramhansa (a minor reformer) condemned idolatry and opposed caste, deprecated child marriage, advocated female education and declared woman to be equal with man. He exhorted people to be 'equal-sighted' to sons and daughters, and to educate them equally.[30] Among the Radha Soami, men of all castes mixed freely together and even on occasion, dined together in secret and there was no strict separation of men and women.[31]

The Deva Samaj founded by Siva Narayan Agnihotri on the 16th of February, 1887, also devoted itself to social reform. The Samaj had missionaries and also lay workers, both men and women. They had two high schools, a number of primary schools, a school for the depressed classes, and a training college for mission workers, called the *Bikashalai*, or House of Development. A good deal of attention was given to female education. They had also successful Boarding School for girls at Ferozepur, teaching upto the Matriculation standard. They did a little medical work too, had two Widows' Homes and had held Industrial Exhibitions. They laid great stress on social reform and also tried to do social service. They had a Temperance League and a Vegetarian League.[32]

As to Tilak being the champion of orthodoxy, only this much can be said in his defence that he had to bear the brunt of the onslaught of orthodoxy. During the tea-episode[33] he, along with Ranade, was tried before the court of Shankaracharya. Tilak was bracketed with the social reformers by the orthodox party. He was under a social boycott for some time by the Brahman priests. Girls from neighbouring houses who

29 Farquhar, J N , op cit , p. 121
30 Ibid , pp 125-127, 132-133
31 Ibid , p 171
32. Ibid , p 180.
33 See Chap II.

came to play with Tilak's daughters would not accept water from Tilak's household even if thirsty. Brahmin cooks would not be ready to work for him and he had difficulty in securing priests for the thread ceremony of one of his sons. In spite of all this he held fast to the view that social reform was necessary but that it should not be forced upon the people by legislation under foreign rulers. He wanted that educated people as enlightened leaders of society should carry the message of social reform to the common people by their example.[32]

In his own personal life Tilak carried out all the reforms he had advocated. He educated his daughters and got them married only after the age of 16. He freely admitted members of the depressed classes in his company, he crossed the seas to England, he attended widow remarriage parties and he freely interdined with men of any creed, community or religion.[33] But Tilak was opposed to irreverential attitude towards our social usages. Ranade and Agarkar condemned the judgment of the Bombay High Court in the Dadaji Vs Rukhmabai case in which the right of the Hindu husband to compel his wife to stay with him was upheld as a violation of a common civil liberty. Tilak criticised them (Ranade and Agarkar) for championing licentious ways of living. He also supported men like Rao Saheb V. N. Mandlik who questioned the right of the social reformers to pose as exponents of public opinion and supported some Poona Sanskrit pandits who waited in deputation upon the Governor of Bombay to inform him of the orthodox view point.[34]

He was opposed to B. M. Malabari, the ardent Parsi reformer, who seemed to believe that social reform consisted in copying the British in every respect. Malabari stood for social reform by legislation. He wanted that Government should allow the widow a handsome amount from her husband's effects in order to ensure her economic independence

32 Parvate T V, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, p 44
33 Ibid, p 45
34 Ibid, p [illegible]

in the case of poor widows marriage ceremony be made very inexpensive, Government may give annual grants for a few years to Widow Marriage Fund in aid of the movement, and special educational facilities be provided for widows to enable them to qualify themselves as school mistresses, mid-wives, medical practitioners etc[37]

Tilak was uncompromisingly against social reform by legislation. But he was not alone. Eminent Indians of his day, such as R.C. Dutta, W. C. Banerjee, K.T. Telang and Setalvad also agreed with him, but they were not as uncompromising as Tilak. Telang even went over to the party of reform on the Age of Consent Bill. So Tilak came to be looked upon as the only champion of Hindu orthodoxy and conservatism.[38] He carried on a crusade against Malabari, other social reformers and the Government over the Age of Consent Bill in his papers, the Kesari and the Mahratta.[39] If we examine a few of the opinions sent to Malabari on the memorandum regarding infant marriage and enforced widowhood in India circulated by him, we shall find that the sentiments of Tilak were echoed by many people

Ripon, the Viceroy, replied, "Indirectly these practices lead to great evils, but they do not in themselves involve crime nor are they so necessarily and inevitably mischievous as to call for suppression by law, if they are sanctioned by the general opinion of the society in which they prevail."[40] W. Holmes, Private Secretary to the Lt. Governor of North Western Province opined, "You will not fail, however, to remember that in all countries the position of women is still more or less unsatisfactory, and that in no country does the Government interfere in this class of social questions without clear previous assurance that its interposition is called for by the ascertained wishes and feelings of a considerable section of the people.[41]

37. Malabari, B M, op. cit, p 9
38 Parvate, T V, op cit p 10
39. Ibid., p 40
40. Malabari, B M, op cit, p 11.
41. Ibid., p. 12.

A Mackenzie Secretary to the Government of India wrote back social progress everywhere must depend upon intellectual The social reformer must turn to education and not to dictation in his crusade against popular beliefs and prejudices Compulsion can never be conviction and without conviction both social and material reform is impossible nowadays [42] A Colvin Finance Member Government of India, replied They are questions intimately connected with the religious practices of the Hindus and while they are open to obvious objection in themselves they cannot be suppressed like *Suttee* or infanticide on the ground that they are in themselves grossly immoral or destructive of human life [43] Sir S C Bayley Home Member Government of India remarked But to reform them the impulse must come from within not from without Government can interpose against what are in the ordinary sense of the word recognised crimes but it can do little against social customs which are universal and which are enforced only by social penalties however injurious such customs may be [44] The most violent reaction however came from Dr Rajendralal Mitra the famous Indologist In an autocratically governed country nothing could be more noxious than practical interference by heads of departments Life would be a curse if such a course were tolerated I have also yet to learn that disparity of age in marriage does more harm in India than what it does in Europe Pardon me also for saying that your picture about the immorality resulting from widowhood is highly over painted Then Dr Mitra drew a pathetic picture of English maids and finally retorted Nor can you tell me that unchaste maids are better than unchaste widows [45]

If such were the views of seasoned administrators and eminent scholars there was nothing wrong in Tilak holding that the initiative for social reform should be taken by

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42 Ibid p 16
43 Ibid p 17
44 Ibid pp 18 19
45 Ibid p 21

educated Indians, and that it should be primarily achieved by properly educating public opinion. He was against legislation to force the pace of reform among ignorant masses, because he believed that the method would not work and all such legislation would remain a dead letter. The social reform proposals he put before his colleagues were :—

(1) Girls should not be married before the age of 14.
(2) Boys should not be married before the age of 20.
(3) No man should marry after he was 40.
(4) If a man wanted to marry again, he must marry a widow.
(5) None should take to drink.
(6) The system of dowry should be abolished.
(7) Widows should not be disfigured.
(8) Everyone accepting these proposals should be ready to contribute one-twentieth of his income to promote the cause of social reform and public work.[46]

At a meeting held under the presidentship of Rao Bahadur Nulkar, these proposals were given serious consideration, the participants in the discussion being Bhandarkar, Ranade, Agarkar and others.[47] Tilak also took part in the deliberations of the National Social Conference year after year.[48] Later on, however, he became convinced that those who called themselves social reformers were doing nothing substantial for social reform and merely indulged in precepts. So, he lost interest in the Social Conferences, both provincial and National.[49] One can conclude with Parvate that "Tilak was not at all a champion of orthodoxy... He was a good, progressive, conservative Hindu."[50]

Just as Tilak wanted the people to be associated with social reform, so Vivekananda also wanted social reform to be broadbased on the consent of the masses. A believer in universalism, he was also a great patriot, and he sincerely believed

46 Parvate, T V, op cit, p 41
47 Ibid, p 41
48 Cf. Chap. V
49 Parvate, T V., op cit p 42
50. Ibid, p 47

that Vedantism was the cement which would unify humanity A passionate lover of freedom he gave the message of fearless ne s and liberty to his people Andrews judged him rather harshly when he said that a flattering recognition at Chicago turned the head of the Swami and his welcome on his return to India was a kind of public triumph and that the Swami became a national hero and his own account of his American tour was painfully bombastic [51] National hero he became and his tour was, no doubt a public triumph but his head was not turned It was faith in the destiny of his nation that made him rather self confident Andrews himself had to concede that years before the great nationalist movement of the twen tieth century Vivekananda was an Indian Nationalist [52]

The Swami was proud to belong to a religion which according to him had taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance [53] He hoped that the Parliament of Religions at Chicago would sound the death knell of all fanati cism of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal [54] He wanted everybody to follow his own path not in a spirit of isolation but in a spirit of co operation He did not expect a Christian to be converted to Hinduism or Buddhism nor did he expect a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian But each was to assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth [55] He was opposed to supernatu ralism and thought that the idea of the supernatural brought spiritual decay dependence superstition and degenerated into a horrible belief in the natural weakness of man [56]

Such a man can neither be branded as an up holder of orthodoxy nor as a blind revivalist He had a universal and liberal approach to Hinduism To him the love and charity for

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51 Andrews C F op cit p 131
52 Ibid p 132
53 Swami Vivekananda Works Vol I p 1
54 Ibid p 2
55 Ibid p 2?
56 Ibid p 120

the whole human race was the test of true religion. Instead of saying 'all men are brothers' one must realise the oneness of human life.[57] But he was opposed to dull uniformity; though all religions were essentially the same, they must have the varieties of form produced by dissimilar circumstances among different nations. People must have their own individual religion, individual so far as the externals of it went.[58] That is why, the Swami would say, the Hindus not only tolerated every religion, but they accepted every religion praying in the mosque of the Mohammedans, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrians, and kneeling before the cross of the Christians, knowing that all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, were so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and moderation, and each of them marking a stage of progress.[59]

To Vivekananda freedom was the song of the soul.[60] It was freedom which distinguished the living from the dead, and the end of all human strivings was freedom ; so only in perfect freedom could there be perfection.[61] The work of Adwait (non-dualism) was to break down privileges , yet in the land of Adwait (India) there were privileges........ for birth and spirituality but not so much privilege for money. The best time in the life of the nation was when the Buddhist attempt was made to break down privileges.[62] The Swami condemned priesthood as cruel and heartless in its nature, and there could be no true religion where there was priesthood ; according to the Vedanta, religion could come only when the idea of privilege had been given up, and not before that.[63] So trampling on every privilege and everything in man that works for

57 Ibid , p. 323
58 Ibid , p 324.
59 Ibid., p. 331
60 Ibid , p 334
61 Ibid., p. 332
62. Ibid., p. 423.
63. Ibid., p 487

privilege man should work for that knowledge which would bring the feeling of sameness towards all mankind[64] Sameness however with regard to external forms and position could never be attained but elimination of privileges could be attained All over the world there was the fight to destroy the privilege claimed on account of intelligence and wealth Privilege was the enjoyment of advantage by one over another and morality aimed at its destruction[65]

No longer India was the land of heathens to receive enlightenment from the Christian missionaries India had her *own contributions to make Religion was the back bone of* Indian life not politics nor military power nor commercial supremacy But spirituality had always been in India[66] Though proud of the heritage of India Vivekananda was not oblivious of the twin dangers that beset Indian life at that time The two great obstacles on India s path to progress were—the Scylla of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilisation If he had to choose between the two the Swami would choose the old orthodoxy not the Europeanised system The reasons were obvious The old orthodox might be ignorant and crude but he was a man having a faith strength and standing on his own feet The Europeanised man on the other hand had no backbone He was a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random from every source and these ideas were unassimilated undigested and unharmonised[67] The most deplorable thing was that his schemes of reforms his vehement vituperations against the evils of certain social customs had as the mainspring some European patronage[68] Vivekananda wanted his people to be no dull imitators he exhorted them to stand and die in their own strength Weakness was the only sin in the world and so all weakness was to be shunned as

64 Ibid p 428
65 Ibid p 434
66 *Ibid Vol III p 137*
67 Ibid p 151
68 Ibid p 151

sin and death.[69] The Swami whole-heartedly endorsed Manu's dictum, "Learn good knowledge with all devotion from the lowest caste. Learn the way to freedom, even if it comes from the Pariah, by serving him. If a woman is a jewel, take her in marriage even if she comes from a low family of the lowest caste."[70]

A keen observer of things, Vivekananda had seen a lot of materialism of the West and had been disillusioned with it. Wealth and power were concentrated into few hands who had no work but to exploit others and who with their power might deluge the whole earth with blood. There was tremendous material tyranny, religion had no place, and Shylocks had the upper hand. Constitutional governments, freedom, liberty and parliament were only jokes.[71] But he did not blindly condemn materialism. He had no hesitation in giving its due to materialism It had come to the rescue of India in a certain sense by throwing open the doors of life to everyone, by destroying the exclusive privileges of caste, by opening up to discussion the inestimable treasures which were hidden away in the hands of a few, who had even lost the use of them.[72] The growth of both the East and West had been lopsided—the West was groaning under the tyranny of the Shylocks, the East under that of the priests, each must keep the other in check.[73]

He ridiculed the idea of religion being confined to formalism only The Hindus were neither Vedantists, nor Pauranics, nor Tantrics They were just 'Don't touchists'. Their religion was in the kitchen, their God was the cooking-pot, and their religion was 'Don't touch me, I am holy.'[74] Vivekananda laughed at the excesses of the West, he laughed at the stupidity of the East. He stood for a true synthesis between the

69 Ibid, p 151
70. Ibid, p 151-152
71 Ibid, p. 158
72 Ibid, p 157
73 Ibid, p 158
74 Ibid, p 167.

East and the West Western ideas of organisation and external civilisation were penetrating and pouring into the East as also Indian spirituality and philosophy were deluging the lands of the West It was inevitable that Indian spirituality should invade the West and Western materialism should come to India A little of materialism was necessary for India and a little of spiritualisation was necessary for the West Thus the balance would be preserved [75] It was his considered opinion that in the all encircling gloom of materialism only the Vedanta could save humanity When the modern tremendous theories of evolution and conservation of energy and so forth are dealing blows to all sorts of crude theologies what can hold any more the allegiance of cultured humanity but the most wonderful convincing broadening and ennobling ideas that can be found only in the most marvellous product of the soul of man the wonderful voice of God the Vedanta ? [76]

But he was no mere revivalist He called upon his countrymen to be as progressive as any nation that ever existed but he also enjoined upon them at the same time to be as faithful and conservative towards their traditions as Hindus alone knew how to be [77] Customs appearing to be positive evils were positively life giving in the past and if they were to be removed they must be removed not with curses but with blessings and gratitude for the glorious work those customs had done for the preservation of the Indian race [78] India had all through her chequered history followed the characteristic course of religious life and it was not possible for her to give that up and take up for herself a new career of politics or something else One should always work under the law of least resistance and in India religious line was the line of least resistance [79] India thus could not only save her own self but she could also offer solace to the West The West was weary

75 Ibid p 141
76 Ibid p 111
77 Ibid. p. 174
78 Ibid p 175
79 Ibid p. 179

and was eager for some new thought. The thoughtful men of the West found in ancient Indian philosophy, especially in the Vedanta, the new impulse of thought they were seeking, the very spiritual food and drink for which they were hungering and thirsting.[80]

Uncritical acceptance of anything would lead to bondage and frustration, and that was his grievance against the social reformers. Personally he had no fault to find with the reformers, but he was not satisfied with their methods of work. For quite a long time past India had been flooded with social reformers and various social reform proposals Most of them were good, well-meaning men and their aims too were laudable on certain points, but in the Swami's opinion social reform had produced no permanent and valuable result, appreciable throughout the country.[81] He agreed that India had to take a great many things from other nations and that she had to learn many lessons from outside. But he was sorry that most of the modern reform movements in India had been inconsiderable imitations of Western means and methods of work That was why the movements bore no fruit.[82] There were obvious evils in Indian society, but in comparison with the different races and nations of the world, among whom he had been, the Swami found that the Indians were the most moral and the most godly people, and their institutions were, in their plan and purpose, best suited to make mankind happy. So Vivekananda stood not for any reformation, but for growth, expansion, development on national lines.[83] He was no preacher

80 Ibid, p 182

81. Ibid, p 191

82. Ibid., p. 195

83. Ibid, p 195 Compare Mahatma Gandhi when he says, "The tendency of the Indian Civilisation is to elevate the moral being, that of the Western Civilisation is to propagate immorality. The latter is godless, the former is based on a belief in God. So understanding and so believing, it behoves every lover of India to cling to the old Indian Civilisation" (M K. Gandhi —*Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, p. 46.)

of any momentary social reform he was not trying to remedy evils but he only asked his countrymen to go forward and complete the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress laid out in the most perfect order by their ancestors They also were breakers of caste but they were not like our modern men They did not mean by the breaking of caste that all the people in a city should sit down together to a dinner of beefsteak and champagne nor that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry when where and whom they choose and reduce the country to a lunatic asylum nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation is to be gauged by the number of husbands its widows get [84] There must be progress in the real sense of the term Everyone in the country from the highest man to the lowest Pariah was to try and become the ideal Brahman Progress was to be constant [85]

Vivekananda claimed to be a greater reformer than any of the social reformers The social reformers wanted to reform only little bits whereas he wanted root and branch reform Both they and he differed in their methods Theirs was the method of destruction his was the method of construction He did not believe in reform rather he believed in growth [86]

The Indians were not to feel small before Europeans No doubt there were evils plentiful in Indian society but so there were evils in every other In India the earth was soaked some times with widows tears in the West the air was rent with the sighs of the unmarried Here poverty was the great bane of life there the life weariness of luxury was the great banethat was upon the race Here men wanted to commit suicide because they had nothing to eat there they committed suicide because they had so much to eat [87] Reformers should proceed very cauti ously The verdict of history is that fanatical reforms defeat their own ends For example the American slaves were emancipated hurriedly Vivekananda found their condition even worse than it was formerly when as the property of somebody

84 Ibid Swami Vivekananda Works Vol III p 196
85 Ibid p 198
86 Ibid p 213
87 Ibid. pp 213-214

they were at least properly looked after. But after emancipation they were the property of no body and none cared for them, their lives being of no value.[88]

Even for social reform the first duty was the education of the people. Most of the reforms agitated for during the 19th century had been mostly ornamental. Each of those reforms touched only the first two castes. The question of widow marriage would not touch 70% of the Indian women, and all such questions only touched the higher castes of Indian people, who were educated at the expense of the masses That was no reformation. Reformers must go down to the root of the problem, they must touch the masses. The Swami demanded what he called radical reform[89] In his opinion the basic defect of Buddhism was its condemnation of Hinduism, and the great merit of Shankaracharya was that he did not bring sudden changes, and brought up to the highest ideal the existing religion.[90] So destructive method was to be eschewed, even idolatry was not to be condemned.[91] Indians must grow according to their own nature. It was vain to attempt the lines of action engrafted upon them by foreign societies.[92] Indians could progress by following the teachings of the Upanishads-strength and fearlessness.[93] They did not talk of salvation, but of freedom[94] "All the ideals of religion that already exist in the world can be immediately included, and we can patiently wait for all the ideals that are to come in the future, to be taken in the same fashion, embraced in the infinite arms of the religion of the Vedanta."[95] But Vivekananda was no jingoist. With all his love for India, and with all his patriotism, and veneration for the ancients, he conceded that Indians had to learn many things from other nations.[96]

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88. Ibid., p 211
89. Ibid., p 216 Compare Mahatma Gandhi, infra, p 327.
90. Ibid., p 217
91. Ibid., p. 218
92. Ibid., p 210
93. Ibid., p 277
94. Ibid., p 258
95. Ibid., p 252
96. Ibid., p 272

India had however more to give than to receive from other nations Whenever in the history of the world a great conquering nation had arisen linking the different parts of the world together then the thought of India had poured through those channels and thus entered into the veins of every race [97] Even before the Buddha Indian thought had penetrated the world The Vedanta had penetrated into China Persia and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago When the mighty mind of the Greek had linked the different parts of the eastern world together Indian thought made itself felt Christianity with all its boasted civilisation was but a collection of little bits of Indian thought [98] Now in the modern world another opportunity had been presented for India by England esta blishing a mighty Empire Vivekananda stood not only for the revival of his own country but for the spiritual conquest of the whole world by the Hindu race [99] It was the proper time for India s spiritual ideas to penetrate deep into the West Indians were to go out and conquer the world through their spirituality and philosophy The only condition of awakened and vigorous national life was the conquest of the world by Indian thought [100]

The Swami had no patience with the extremists There were those who after drinking the cup of Western wisdom thought that they knew everything laughed at the ancient sages To them all Hindu thought was arrant trash philosophy mere child s prattle and religion the superstition of fools There were people on the other extreme who were a sort of monomaniac They had philosophical and metaphysical expla nation for every superstition belonging to their particular race gods or village These two types of extremists were to be avoided [101] He would prefer rank atheists to superstitious

97 Ibid p [illegible]
98 Ibid., p [illegible]
99 Ibid., p [illegible]
100 Ibid p [illegible]
101 Ibid p [illegible]

fools. "What we want is vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, not softening namby-pamby ideas." [102]

Free exchange of thoughts by mature persons was welcome, but vilification of any religion was to be deprecated. What had galled the Swami most was the vilification of Hindu life in America by the Christian missionaries. There were horrible pictures in children's text books to prejudice young minds. The Hindu mother was painted as throwing her children to the crocodiles in the Ganges, a man would be shown burning his wife at a stake with his own hands, so that she might become a ghost, and to rment the husband's enemy, huge cars crushing over human beings, a car running over fanatics in the streets of Calcutta, in every village of India there was supposed to be a pond full of the bones of little babies. [103] Such vilifiers should have borne in mind that when religion was at a discount in the West, the restless Western atheist or agnostic found in the Gita or in the Dharmapadam the only place where his soul could anchor. [104]

The West wanted liberty, among the religions Vedanta alone promised liberty. Liberty was the first condition of growth. On the 19th of November, 1894, Vivekananda wrote from New York, "Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress and marriage and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others"[105] But Indians must evolve a pattern for themselves. Vivekananda had been to the West and it was his experience that there was a very wide divergence between the Western society and the Indian with regard to the primal course and goal of each, and that no sect in India framed after the Western model would work. Those who had never been to the West were utterly ignorant of the rules and prohibitions regarding the association of men and women obtaining there,

102. Ibid , p 278.
103 Ibid., Vol. IV. p. 290-291
104. Ibid , p 295
105. Ibid., p. 313.

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102 Ibid , p 278.
103 Ibid., Vol. IV p. 290-291.
104. Ibid., p 295
105. Ibid , p 313.

which acted as safeguards to preserve the purity of the Western women It is these ignorant persons who allowed a free rein to the unrestrained intermingling of men and women in Indian society[106] India could never attain greatness with mere echoing and base imitation of others with dependence on others with slavish weakness and with vile detestable cruelty[107] So the Europeanisation of India was an impossible and foolish task The elements of progress were always actively present in India Attempts in the past were made to break through the barriers of caste in its degenerate form But it must always be we who build up a new India as an effect and continuation of her past assimilating helpful foreign ideas wherever they may be found Never can it be they growth must proceed from within All that England can do is to held India to work out her own salvation All progress at the dictation of another whose hand is at India s throat is valueless in my opinion The highest work can only degenerate when slave labour produces it[108] The objection of the Swami against the reformers was that they had no faith in themselves while the orthodox in spite of their crudeness had more faith in themselves Moreover the reformers played into the hands of Europeans and pandered to their vanity[109]

Analogous views were held by Mrs Annie Besant the illustrious leader of the Theosophical movement in India The Theosophical society is the most maligned of all the so-called revivalist movements in India Accusations have been brought against it that it tended to revive superstition that the Hindu Theosophists were encouraged in inertia laziness and sloth that Theosophy stood for orthodoxy for reaction for inactivity and for sheer inertia[110] The claim of Mrs Besant on the other hand was that Theosophy had rendered a great service to India The condition of India was deplorable when

106 Ibid pp 411 412
107 Ibid p 412
108 Ibid Vol V p 1 8
109 Ibid p 153
110 Besant Mrs Annie *The Birth of New India* p 351 Lecture at the Theosophical Convention 1909

Mrs. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott set their feet on the Indian soil. "Scepticism and materialism had eaten out the life of the nation. The crowds of the so called English-educated class were followers of Huxley, Mill and Spencer, and had entirely forgotten their own literature, were contemptuous of the past and hence hopeless for the future; they were copying English ways, English manners, filling their houses with English furniture to the destruction of Indian arts and crafts. They had lost all national spirit.

"De-spiritualisation had brought about national degeneracy. There was no activity of national life, no pulsing of the national heart.. .. ... " [111]

Theosophy halted this process of de-nationalisation, revived the religious value of Hindu teachings, emphasized the glory of the Vedas and Upnishads, proclaimed the value of Indian thought and the priceless heritage of the Indian people; and Indians began to pride themselves on their past. [112] Mrs. Besant conceded that with the revival of religion there might be some recrudescence of superstition, just as in re-lighting a smouldering fire, there was bound to be some smoke. But the remedy for the smoke was to blow the fire into flame. With the spread of Theosophy the smoke of superstition would vanish, and the fire of knowledge would blaze up. But if knowledge was refused, the smoke would continue; for men would rather have a smoky fire than none. [113] The Theosophists tried to dispel inertia from the life of the nation. The first Industrial Exhibition was held in Bombay at an early convention of the Theosophical Society on the initiative of Col. Olcott. The National Congress was founded by English and Indian Theosophists working hand in hand. The first meeting which suggested it was held at a convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. [114] Col. Olcott and Mrs. Besant preached Swadeshi when it was very unpopular. Mrs. Besant preached it from the economic point of view long before the

111. Ibid , p 353.
112 Ibid , p. 354.
113. Ibid., p 358.
14, Ibid., p 358,

Bengalis used it as a political weapon [115] The Theosophists had divined that the steps leading to national decline had been in order lack of spirituality, disappearance of higher intelligence and want of material prosperity So taking first thing first the three steps to be taken *for national regeneration* advocated by them were revival of spirituality building and revival of education substituting *for* the existing system an education suited to the crying needs of the country and lastly attainment of material prosperity When spirituality would be re established and education wisely chosen and properly directed the restoration of national prosperity would inevitably and inescapably follow [116]

The Theosophical Society was not socially reactionary true it advocated reforms according to its own ideals In its view India was no longer isolated she was now a nation among *nations Passing elements in national life must be separated* from the lasting ones The proper course was to separate those no longer useful from those that were valuable in a nation [117] For building up the life of the nation Mrs Besant wanted an allround social reform You have to modify your caste you have to take foreign travel as a matter of course you have to educate your women you have to educate the masses of your people you have to do away with child marriage These great reforms you have to bring about The Nation s life depends on them and remember *that the* Indian Nation does not live for itself alone it is a type unique *among* all the *Nations of the world It knows how to join* spirituality to intellect to physical prosperity and so to build the Nation on all sides [118]

But this work of social reconstruction must be brought about by Indians themselves They themselves must build the India of the future No foreigner could make India what she ought to be No Government no power no friendship no

115 Ibid p 308
116 Ibid p 373
117 Ibid p 232
118 Ibid p 235

amount of eloquence could make a nation. Men and women of the Nation alone could build it.[119] Mrs. Besant, was no advocate of isolation. She admitted that East and West embodied different views of life, and took up different attitudes with regard to the great problems of humanity. But both had their values. Both were necessary for the growth of humanity in future and it was necessary for the welfare of all, and not only for the welfare of the East, that the eastern view of life, the eastern attitude and the eastern habit of thought should be preserved for the benefit of the world at large[120] She advised the people to take whatever was valuable in the English civilisation, and there was much that was valuable in the English civilisation. But they should retain their national character. "Take from other nations whatever of value they have to give you, learn their science, for that is their special contribution just now to the thought of the world, profit by their discoveries, utilise what they really have of value in their scientific thought, but put upon it the hall-mark of Ceylon"[121] (She was addressing the Ceylon Reform Society.)

Like Vivekananda and Annie Besant, Bankim Chandra did a lot to instil self-confidence in Indians. He was, however, no blind supporter of things indigenous and judged them on their merit. According to Rabindranath, Bankim's Krishna-Charita is not Krishna, but the Rationalism of Bankim.[122] Bankim's credit lay in the fact that he raised nationalism to the dignity of a religion. Realising that religion had great importance in India, he concluded that the innate feeling of indifference towards nationalism could be overcome only by placing new religious ideals before the people of India.[123] He thought that for the eradication of social evils govern-

119. Ibid , pp 235-236.

120 Besant, Mrs. Annie, in a Lecture delivered before the Ceylon Social Reform Society Ibid p 401.

121. Ibid , p 406.

122. Majumdar, B.B., op. cit. p. 408,

123. Ibid , p. 417,

mental regulations would not be of much use social forces were much more important in this respect The abolition of polygamy by the aid of legislature was not desirable Social evils could be removed only through education of public opinion[124]

Thus Hindu revivalism was no supporter of evils in social life Even a carping critic of evils in Indian social life concedes that revived Hinduism was as serious and sincere about *morality and moral conduct as Brahmoism could claim to be*[125] According to the same writer Brahmoism was an application of Christianity to Hinduism as Sikhism was that of Islam to Hinduism Hindu revivalist movement was not prepared to acknowledge any debt to western Christianity[126] for the reasons already mentioned

Bankim was the high priest of Neo Hinduism and Hindu social reaction in Bengal that followed as a protest against the pretensions of aggressive Christian propaganda and more particularly against the cultural domination of the ' stranger within our gate[127] All these revivals and reactions were directly the fruits of the previous movement of religious and social revolt led by the Brahmo Samaj itself In this sense they were not merely destructive of the Brahmo propaganda but also at the same time partially corrective of and supplementary to it Most if not all the protagonists of this new Hindu religious revival and social reaction in Bengal had been in their early life connected with the Brahmo Samaj and the new revivalist movement that openly declared war upon all the fundamental progressive ideals of the Brahmo Samaj whether consciously or unconsciously practically took up the cause of modern religious and social reconstruction in Bengal at the point where the Brahmo Samaj had already brought it[128]

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124 *Ibid* p 470

125 Chaudhuri N C *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* p 213

126 Ibid p 218

127 Pal B C *Memories* Vol I p 427

128 Ibid pp 427-423

In the wake of Hindu revival and reaction, Harisabhas began to crop up everywhere which inaugurated a kind of congregational worship. At these Sabhas scriptural texts were read and expounded, and hymns or Bhajans sung. It was clearly a reproduction of the Brahmo mode of worship. Although this revival or reaction movement adopted or adapted the spirit or even form of the Brahmo Samaj religion and worship, it was violently against the social idealism of the Brahmo movement [129]

In fact, except in a few cases, educated Indians had never been at heart won over to the western ideas. About the condition of Indians in 1824, Heber remarked," The majority of intellectual elite continued to live on the thoughts and traditions inherited from previous generations. Many adopted some of the outward appertenances of modern civilization, mixed in English society, studied European philosophy and science, and gave their money and personal services for the promotion of English education, but refused to subscribe to the subversive doctrines of the West, and clung to their religion and their caste." [130] Little wonder that Indians in the eighties of the last century should openly raise their voice against cultural domination by the west. The Indian Civil Service as a body had no sympathy whatever with the aspirations of the educated portion of the native community. All classes of Europeans equally disliked educated natives of India. [131] It was the considered view of Cotton that social and moral changes should not be forced upon India, because there was no homogeneity between the Government and the people [132] It was impossible to do away with the polytheistic past of 30 centuries or more. No doubt, the effect of English education had been to break that continuity and the habits and the opinions of the people, and even their

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129 Ibid , p 429

130 O' Malley (Ed) *Quoted in Modern India and the West.* p 574.

131 Cotton, H J S , op cit. p 44.

132 Ibid pp 132-133.

mode of life had been changed but the hereditary tendencies by which the progress of the race must be ultimately deter mined had been left untouched There was no power of guidance or consolidation [133] Moreover the wholesale importation into India of European civilization in its most material and anarchical form was all the more deplorable when there was utter confusion in the West itself Nations Churches and classes were at war with one another and disunited [134] A complicating factor in India was the caste which had the all pervading influence in India Even Sikhs and Muslims were all influenced and stimulated by castes which were as distinct among them as amongst the Hindus [135]

Like Vivekananda Tilak Mrs Besant and Bankim Cotton was of the view that necessary changes must be brought by the people themselves arising from national aspirations and emana ting from a spontaneous impulse The changes effected by an alien and benevolently despotic administration would be spas modic and artificial and lacking spontaneity they could not be of permanent value [136] In order to be effective the social and moral regeneration of India must result from the action of internal forces Its tendencies must be moulded by the accumulated influences of the past and by the direct action of the present [137] Like Mrs Besant and the Theosophists he also held the virtues of Hindu family life—charity filial piety ties of affection rigid chastity—in high esteem Public opinion of neighbouring elders had also a hand in making people keep within the bounds of morality [138] But educated Indians who had been taken away from their moorings were in a sad plight The difficulties under which they labour are occasioned by the abrupt departures from old habits and customs, the

133 Ibid p 13?

134 Ibid p 133 134

135 Ibid p 143

136 Ibid p 144

137 Ibid p 144

138 Idid p 145

domestic discords, the social dissensions, the religious confusion, the tenebrous rationalism which insufficiently supplies the place of a belief in the old theology, the bitter and increasing sense of political discontent, the very life of concealment and even of self-deception which as individuals they are so often compelled to lead." [139] "The Anglicised, denationalised section of the educated community evoked no cord of sympathy in the heart of the masses, who were conservative enough to withstand the onrush of alien ideas. If we may observe in the minds of many educated natives an undisguised contempt for the simple faith of their fore-fathers, if we must admit the existence of a tendency to exaggerate the value of modern at the expense of ancient achievements, if we cannot deny that one effect of our education has been to undermine the social feelings of attachment, obedience, reverence for age, and respect for ancestors, if these are evils which English education has encouraged.—I make bold to say among the leaders of the native community and among the mass of the people who follow their guidance there is little or no sympathy with these tendencies The vast majority of Hindu thinkers have formed themselves into a party of reaction against the voice of a crude and empirical rationalism which seeks only to decry the social monuments raised in ancient times by Brahmin theocrats and legislators, to vilify the past in order to glorify the present, and to sing the glories of an immature civilization with praises never accorded to the greatest triumphs of humanity in the past. The innate conservatism of the nation is beyond the power of any foreign civilisation to shatter. The stability of the Hindu character could have shown itself in no way more conspicuously than by the wisdom with which it has bent itself before the inevitable rush of western thought, and has still preserved amidst all the havoc of destruction an underlying current of religious sentiment, and a firm conviction that social and moral order can only rest upon a religious basis." [140]

139. Ibid., p 149.
140 Ibid , pp 151-152.

accepted the British rule and were free from all sense of separateness from the British officials K T Telang[2] warmly supported Malabari s stand against child marriage but protested against his favourable opinion of English society and family life[3] Many educated Indians thought with Malabari that liberation of Indian society from the trammels of out dated convention was much more urgent than its emancipation from foreign yoke Even among politicians of almost every complexion the necessity of removing from the Indian social system the reproach of degrading anachronisms was recognised The outstanding feature of the reformers was their faith in the British Empire as a liberalising and civilising force in India although historically speaking the direct influence of British rule in India may be said to have been rather to stereotype existing institutions But it had not indeed been positively opposed to progressive social movements[5] The social policy however of the British Government in India had partly for political reasons been rather conservative

Ardent patriots in India therefore held that there could be no real social or economic progress without the achievement[4] of political progress Not that they did not believe in social reform but that they thought that social prejudices died hard and it would be long before the masses could be won over to the side of social reform in the meantime political progress must be achieved which would in turn facilitate the achievement of social emancipation About the middle of the eighties a great controversy arose regarding the relative importance of

2 a Justice Kashinath Trimbak Telang was a teacher at the Elphinstone College (18_7 7_) until he joined the Bar as an advocate He was a scholar of Sanskrit and was consulted by the judges on points of Hindu Law In 1884 he became a member of the Bombay Legislative Council and in 1889 a judge of the Bombay High Court One of the most active founders of the Congress he was its first hard working Secretary in Bombay He died in 1893

3 Natarajan S op cit p "0

4 Chirol V op cit p 199

5 Natarajan S op cit p 6

social reform. An acute and even acrimonious controversy whether political reform should precede or follow social and religious reconstruction, was often carried on, on the platform and in the press in all the Presidency towns, and the high and low alike evinced a deep interest in it.[5a] The revivalists considered that the so-called reformers were a mischievous, though imbecile set of men, who were playing into the hands of Mr. Malabari, for instead of adopting the true method of social progress by effecting "reform from within," they were seeking to force "reform from without" on an unwilling community. The reform party retorted that reform from within was impossible and moonshine.[6] In February, 1886, K. T. Telang delivered a lecture on "Ought Social Reform to precede Political Reform,"[7] wherein he explained the view-point of his party.

Telang took the position that no sharp line of demarcation between matters social and political could be drawn. For example, education was of vital importance alike for political and social purposes Similarly the social importance of the removal of prohibition against sea-voyage was obvious, but the political value of it was equally manifest. The question of infant marriage was, no doubt, a social one, but the modes suggested for remedying the evil had raised great political issues, touching the province of legislation, and the true functions and limits of State activities. So political and social questions were so intertwined, he emphasized, that a hard and fast line could not in practice be drawn between them.[8]

On two grounds, however, Telang conceded, precedence could be given to social reform over political reform The first was that slavery at home was incompatible with liberty abroad. But in India there was no domestic slavery, all were slaves of the past. There were no male tyrants and female slaves. So

5 a. Rao, K Subba op , cit. p , 185.

6 Chandavarkar, N G., op, cit , pp 33-34.

7. Ibid , p , 26

8 *Address before the Students' Literary and Scientific Society by K. T, Telang, pp, 2-5.*

political and social might be Telang would say two distinct spheres of activity [9] The second was that a nation socially low could not be politically great Telang was prepared to accept it if it meant that social and political progress went together But in his opinion no preference for social reform was warranted On the other hand there were instances in history to show that even in the absence of progressive social condition political progress had been possible England had not become socially progressive before she could make political progress in the 17th century Similarly the Maratha ascendancy to power in the latter half of the 17th century had not been preceded by social progress [10] According to Telang reform should go along the line of least resistance In India all social reforms directly or indirectly involved religious questions so matters of social reform would rouse the greatest storm of protest Hence a wise reformer would always follow the line of least resistance [11] work for political reform and utilise it for the eradication of social evils He was fully convinced that more *energy ought to be devoted to political reform than* to social reform [12] His argument was that the spirit which would impel to political reform must needs burst forth in other directions also more or less frequently with greater or less force [13] If the country would go forward politically naturally there would be a tendency to go forward socially History has justified the line of argument of Telang Today women have equal rights with men in India and they occupy the most responsible positions in the life of the nation The Indian Constitution has made the practice of untouchability punishable and many social evils have disappeared

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9 Ibid pp 3 4
10 Ibid pp 4 5
11 Ibid p 12
12 Ibid p 12
13 Ibid p 13
14 Ibid p 14
15 Ibid p 14
15a Quoted in K Subba Rao s *Revived Memories* p 215

Telang further argued that in politics Indians had to stand against a democratic free nation, the most benign Government committed to bring about political changes. So, he thought, progress in the political field could be achieved more easily and more speedily, whereas in the social field they were face to face with a strongly entrenched, out-moded orthodoxy, impervious to reason and hence it would take time to storm the citadel of orthodoxy. Instead of making a frontal attack, he advocated an indirect attack so that the foundations of orthodoxy might be sapped only bit by bit. To sum up, the line of least resistance was to be followed.[14] Argument generally went a long way in politics, matters could be reasoned out, the pros and cons of a matter could be critically and impartially examined. But in social reform reason was at a discount, orthodoxy was blind by prejudice, sentiment and superstition and feeling and tradition were involved to a very large extent.[15] The Hindu of Madras also expressed similar views. On January 14, 1891, it wrote, "By giving prominence to certain social problems, it (the Congress) would run no risk of narrowing its national character. It would not repel politicians and it would attract many who are not primarily politicians It would incur no decrease in the consideration shown to its opinions either here or in England. On the contrary, it would supply an additional guarantee of the genuineness of its aims, and no one who has followed Mr. Malabari's success can doubt that its acceptance in England as a political factor in India, would be furthered. The question, however, as to whether a National Congress should intreest itself in social progress is not entirely a question of convenience. It is one that will ultimately have to be decided on grounds of moral duty and historical necessity, and the time for the decision cannot be far distant." [15a]. It further remarked, "It is comparatively easy to demolish the Anglo-Indian Government and ask our rulers to carry on the administration on the

14. Ibid., p, 14. 15 Ibid., p, 14

15.a. Quoted in K Subba Rao's *'Revived Memories'* p., 215.

lines suggested by them The responsibility of working the change is not theirs, and the task of political reform so far as the Congress leaders are concerned is attended with little difficulty Not so the task of social reform The burden of giving effect to the alterations that we might suggest is ours The foreign rulers have nothing to do with them The social reformer has therefore, a more serious and difficult contest before him than the political reformer If it is this increased responsibility that scares educated men away from social problems they will hardly receive credit for courage [135]

There was also another point to be taken into consideration In political matters Indians, irrespective of caste creed, or religion, might gather on a common platform Hindus Mussalmans Parsis the people of Eastern India, Southern India Western India and Northern India might unite to endeavour for the attainment of common political ends [14] It was not easy on the other hand to seek unanimity in social matters Hindus had certain problems which were peculiar to themselves and even at that Hindus of the North had certain problems different from those of the South Hindus of Bengal had problems different from the Hindus of Gujarat Mohamme dans had their own peculiar problems and so had Parsis There were also different stages of development among the different communities

In this respect Cotton and Telang held identical views In Cotton s view If political reform is thus secured by the concerted action of all the educated classes in India that must and inevitably tell favourably on the advancement of social progress [14] Telang was conscious of the fact that there was no difference of opinion among Indians with regard to the goal, there were only differences of approach Some believed in legislation some sought relief in State aid and some were inclined to trust to the development from within of the energy

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13 b. I d. p 413
14. Te . . h. T. op cit p 1
14. a. C. on H. J S op cit p. 16

glamour of foreign ideals and institutions Their supreme ambition was to produce Europe in India and cast and mould Indian thought and life after the fashion of the civilised West So they ignored the actualities of the Indian situation and life and their passion was more destructive than constructive[38] and their methods were more revolutionary than evolutionary [39]

Vivekananda the Patriot Saint was the most ardent exponent of this New Nationalism The ovation the Swami had got in America had raised the head of his countrymen in the world and had dispelled many hazy notions in the West about India In a welcome Address to him at Colombo on his return from the West on January 15 1897 his countrymen gratefully accepted that by his noble work and example he had put humanity under an obligation difficult to repay and that thereby he had shed fresh lustre upon the Motherland [40] Vivekananda was proud of the fact that India was the mother land of philosophy, of spirituality and of ethics of sweetness gentleness and love and that she was still the first and foremost of all the nations of the world in these respects [41]

His nationalism was to be no beggar at anybody s door India had her own priceless heritage of spirituality to offer to anybody who had anything to contribute to her regeneration Indians must go out and exchange their spirituality for any thing others had to give to them for the marvels of the region of spirit they would exchange the marvels of the region of matter They were not to be students always but teachers also There could be no equality when one party was always the teacher and the other party was always at his feet And without equality there could be no true friendship In order to be equal with the American or the Englishman, the Indians would have not only to learn but also to teach and they had yet a lot to teach to the world for centuries to come [42] The

38 Ibid p 195

39 Ibid p 191

40 Swami Vivekananda Works Vol III p 104

41 Ibid p 147

42 Ibid, p 318

Swami had always a dig upon those Social Reformers who represented Anglicised India, and would remind them that in the Indian Society there were problems that neither they nor their Western *Gurus* could even grasp, much less solve.[43] There were evils in Indian Society which must be removed, but others, whose society suffered from worse evils had no right to poke their nose in Indian affairs. Missionaries talked of immorality, infanticide and the evils of the Hindu marriage system ; but there might be actual picture of some other countries before which all the imaginary missionary pictures of the Hindu Society would pale into insignificance. Evils had grown up in Hindu Society no doubt under centuries of misfortune, but if a comparison be made, the Hindu would be found head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.[44]

Vivekananda thought that the reform societies and reformers in India since the twenties of the 19th century had proved a failure, because they did not know the secret and had not learned the great lesson to be learned. They had laid all the social evils at the door of religion and were entirely destructive and never constructive , little wonder that they failed. The reformers had not appreciated the Spirit of the Nation. They did not realise that all was growth from inside out, that all evolution was only a manifestation of a preceding involution , that the seed could only assimilate the surrounding elements, but grew a tree in its own nature [45]

The nature of the Indian Nation was spiritual and the Swami was so sure of the destiny of India that he thought that if India died, then all spirituality from the world would be extinct ; all moral perfection, all sweet-sympathy for religion, and all ideality would be extinct , ' and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest , fraud, force and competition its ceremonies , and the human soul its sacrifice." India lived

43 Ibid , Vol IV , p 253

44 Ibid , p 292

45. Ibid , p 293.

glamour of foreign ideals and institutions Their supreme ambition was to produce Europe in India and cast and mould Indian thought and life after the fashion of the civilised West So they ignored the actualities of the Indian situation and life and their patriotism was more destructive than constructive[38] and their methods were more *revolutionary than evolutionary*[39]

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38 Ibid p 108

39 Ibid p 109

40 Swami Vivekananda Works Vol III p 104

41 Ibid p 147

42 Ibid p 318

not for herself but for the whole world so those who thought the revival of Hinduism was only a manifestation of patriotic impulse were deluded [46] India was to guide the modern world The searchlight of modern thought had dispersed the smoke which covered the ancient homestead of the Hindus because of the incendiary fire set ablaze by unfriendly hands Now the Hindu who had almost despaired could see that this home was the one that was standing in all its strength and that all the rest had either vanished or were building their hou es anew after the Hindu plan [47]

India and the West were definitely on different lines According to the Swami of the West the goal was individual independence, the language money making education the means politics of India the goal was *Mukti* the language the Veda and the means renunciation [48] He was sure that India would conquer England but India would possess her only through spirituality He was pained to find that in India there was stability but no progress Men and women were mere auto matons and had no spark of life Education was the training by which the current and expression of will were brought under control and became fruitful That education was no education which made a mere machine It was more blessed even to go wrong impelled by one s free will and intelligence than to be good as an automaton [49]

It was his experience that the Indians were not to be automatons The Indian nation was by far the most moral and religious nation in the whole world and it would be a blasphemy to compare them with any other nation [50] Not that other nations were to be condemned but that all nations must grow according to their own genius There could be no out ward uniformity for all Everyone was to grow along his own line Education habit customs laws and rules were to be

46 Ibid p 294
47 Ibid p 295
48 Ibid p 409
49 Ibid p 4 (in a letter to a Bengali lady from Deoghar 23-1° 1900)
50 Ibid p Vol V p 150

different for different men and nations in conformity with their difference of temperament.[51] The soul of the Hindu nation was religion Because no one had been able to destroy that, so the Hindu Nation was still living, having survived so many trials and tribulations. With the rolling of thousands of centuries had taken place the existing evolution of the Hindu national character.[52] It was no longer possible to turn back the current of the stream. Even if the Indian life of the past ten thousand years had been a mistake, there was no help for it, and if any attempt was made to form a new character, the inevitable result would be death.[53] So the door of cultural intercommunication must be kept open, India must receive from other nations, as also she must be prepared to give something to others. But there should be no imitation, there must be assimilation. When India borrowed anything from others, she must mould it after her own fashion, always preserving in full her own characteristic nationality.[54]

It was this very nationalism, which had certain elements of all forms of nationalism—humanitarian, Jacobin, traditional, liberal and integral[55] which was powerfully agitating Indian life by the end of the last century. Even Indian patriots sometimes misunderstood this nationalism as merely religious nationalism, and little else. Thus Mr. Nehru holds that to the end of the nineteenth century many Indians accepted, consciously or unconsciously, the British ideology of empire. So they sought relief in religious nationalism, in the thought that at least in the sphere of religion and philosophy they were second to no other people True, they did not possess the outward show and glitter of the West, but they had the real inner article, far more valuable and worth having. Vivekananda and others as well as the interest of Western scholars in our old

51 Ibid, p 350
52 Ibid, p 362
53. Ibid, p. 363
54. Ibid, p. 366
55. For a discussion of the integral form of nationalism Cf C J H Hayes, op cit pp 164-224.

philosophies gave them a measure of confidence in self respect again and roused up their dormant pride in their past[56] Dada bhai Naoroji s Poverty and un British Rule in India and books by Ramesh Dutt and William Digby and others gave a political and economic foundation to Indian nationalism[57] Mr Nehru further concedes that challenge to the British version of history economics and administration in India grew but Indians continued to function within their (British) ideology that was on the whole the condition of Indian nationalism at the turn of the century[58] *This however is too simplified a picture of the* situation As we have seen the liberal leadership of the Congress might have been moving into the orbit of the British ideology but the New Nationalism which was out was stirring the very soul of India and was throwing a challenge to British ideology Even Mr Nehru the agnostic and the modern man[59] had in his mind a picture of India which had airs of mysticism and romanticism about it when he said Behind and within her battered body one could still glimpse a majesty of soul Through long ages she had travelled and gathered much wisdom on the way and trafficked with strangers and added them to her own big family and witnessed days of glory and of decay and suffered humiliation and terrible sorrow, and seen many a strange sight but throughout her long journey she had clung to her immemorial culture, drawn strength and vitality from it and shared it with other lands [60] Vivekananda had said that much in a different language

Little wonder then that foreigners should misunderstand and malign the New Nationalism According to Chirol the New Nationalism (which he called Hindu) aimed at an organised uplifting of the old Hindu traditions social and religious intellectual and moral against the imported ideals of an alien race

56 Nehru J *An Autobiography* p 4[illegible]
57 Ibid p 4[illegible]
58 Ibid p 4[illegible]
59 Gunther John *Inside Asia* p 4[illegible]
60 Nehru J op cit p 4[illegible]

and an alien civilisation.[61] From 1895, Tilak stood forth as the appointed leader of the 'nation' and was the inspired prophet of a New Nationalism.[62] The Congress also, Chirol averred, following the 'line of least resistance', pressed for political concessions from England, where they had "friends among the garrison," instead of fighting an uphill battle for social reforms against the dead-weight of popular ignorance and prejudice among their own people.[63] In the heyday of the Hindu Social Reform Movement, he would say, before it was checked by the onrush of political agitation, the question of the elevation of the depressed castes was often and earnestly discussed by progressive Hindus themselves[64]. It was the breath of the West which had stimulated intellectual stir in India of which Hindu revivalism and political agitation, glorified under the name of Nationalism were the latest and most prominent expression.[65] Chirol was of opinion that this nationalism had hampered the cause of social progress not only by its reactionary religious and social tendencies, but also by diverting the energies of some good workers into the relatively barren field of political agitation. Nationalism was not the by-product of the social reform movement which had kindled the enthusiasm of an older generation in the nineteen seventies and eighties.[66]

We have already seen that nationalism in India was obvious from the time of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. True, that nationalism up to 1885 was not aggressive, but rather liberal; and our social reform movement also during that period was rather a pale imitation of the West. The character of our nationalism had surely undergone a transformation during the eighties of the last century, and it was natural that the social reform movement should be more aggressive, more assertive, more anti-West and more on 'national lines'. True, as Desai

61. Chirol, V. op cit p. 31.
62. Ibid, p. 47.
63 Ibid, p. 156
64. Ibid, p. 181.
65 Ibid, p. 198.
66. Ibid., p 199,

ays the liberal leadership was in the absolute control of the Congress up to 1905, but the New Nationalism was stirring the country Not the Liberals were the idols of the people but the Extremists It is surprising that even Nehru holds that socially speaking the revival of Indian nationalism in 1907 was definitely reactionary The new nationalism in India was, he says religious nationalism, and the Moderates represented a more advanced social outlook and advocated petty social reforms to weaken caste and to do away with old social customs which hindered growth[67]

It is enough to remark that even the social outlook of the *liberals was that of* the upper middle class *They could never* touch the heart of the masses On the other hand Dayananda and the Arya Samaj Bankim Ramkrishna Mission and Viveka nanda and Tilak and his friends appealed to a far wider audi ence We have also seen that all these societies and persons[68] were in their own way in favour of social reform they were only not to be dictated about by the West nor were they prepared to accept any obligation of the Christian missionaries We shall now proceed to how that social reform and nationalism went hand in hand in pite of the apparent opposition between the two at times and that both were interdependent more or less directly or indirectly

That nationalism and social reform movement went side by side is evident from the fact that as soon as the nationalist forces were organi ed in the form of the Indian National Con gress only two years later the National Social Conference was organised in 1887 Before that there had been the Bombay Presidency Association the *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* the Madras Maha an Sabha and the Briti h India Association But they were local bodies and dealt with local problems Similar ly there were local Social Reform Bodies[69] and they carried on their work in particular areas The Indian Association of

67 Nehru J op cit p 4
68 Cf Chap 3
69 Cf Chap I

Surendra Nath Banerjea, no doubt, had a wider appeal, and the first Indian National Conference met in 1883, to which representatives from all parts of India were invited. Soon after Malabari proposed a National Association for social reforms with the existing societies as branches and the officials from the Viceroy downwards as sympathisers.[70]

From the very first session of the Congress, social questions engaged the attention of Congressmen. When the correspondent of the 'Times' in Bombay mentioned in his dispatch that the Muslims were conspicuous by their absence at the first Congress and that there was no talk of social reform, and also there was an editorial on the subject, K.T. Telang replied to the same. After having asserted that there were a few Muslims, he remarked, "But when the programme of business was informally discussed by the members, they decided that after the subjects for which they had specially assembled were disposed of, questions of social reform should be considered if there was time. As it happened there was no time to do this, because several of our members were obliged to leave for their respective homes on the third day of our meeting. But on that day a very earnest social reformer, Diwan Bahadur Raghunath Rao of Madras, gave an eloquent address on social questions, and he was followed by another eminent reformer, the Hon. M. G. Ranade "[71]

The very aims of the national movement were the fusion into one national whole of all the different and, till recently, discordant elements that constituted the population of India, the gradual regeneration along all lines, mental, moral, social and political, of the nation thus evolved, and the consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such of its conditions as might be unjust or injurious to the latter country.[72] Taking to task those who abused the Congress for not taking up social questions, it was

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70 Malabari, B M., *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India*, p 6.

71 Proceedings of the lst I N C, 1885, pp 83-84,

72 Report, 3rd, I.N C, 1887, pp. 2-3,

said that throughout the country social and religious Conferences associations and guilds were working at those deeper and more spiritual problems and in many cases men most prominent in the political work of the Congress would be found equally amongst the most prominent in the more spiritual work which the other bodies were carrying on But the methods and organisation requisite for success in the one case would be fatal to success in the other [73]

Dadabhai Naoroji had discussed this question earlier at length in his Presidential Address to the Second Congress It *has been asserted* and this Congress ought to take up questions of social reforms and our failure to do so has been urged as a reproach against us Certainly no member of this National Congress is more alive to the necessity of social reforms than I am but gentlemen for every thing there are proper times proper circumstances proper parties and proper places we are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations not to discuss social reforms But besides this there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom even in the same provinces customs and social arrangements differ widely There are Mohammedans and Christians of various denominations Parsees Sikhs Brahmos and what not—men indeed of each and all of those numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India How can this gathering of all classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class ? What do any of us know of the internal home life of the customs traditions feelings prejudices of any class but our own ? How could a gathering a cosmopolitan gathering like this discuss to any purpose the reforms needed in any one cla s ? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses But it does not follow that becau e this national political body does not presume to discuss social reforms the

73 Ibid p 6

delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay in many cases far more deeply, interested in these questions than in those political questions we do discuss, or that those several communities whom those delegates represent are not doing their utmost to solve those complicated problems on which hinge the practical introduction of those reforms . .. each community is now doing its best according to its lights, and the progress that it has made in education I did not I think particularise. The Mohammedans knew what is being done by persons of their community to push on the education their brethren so much need ; the Hindus are everywhere doing what they can to reform those social institutions which they think require improvement. There is not one single community here represented of which the ablest and best men do not feel that much has to be done to improve the social, moral, religious states of their brethren, and which, as a fact, they are not striving to effect, gradually, those needful improvements; but these are essentially matters too delicate for a stranger's handling—matters which must be left to the guidance of those who alone fully understand them in all their bearings, and which are wholly unsuited to discussion in an assembly like this in which all classes are intermingled."[74]

Badruddin Tyabji, President of the 3rd session of the Indian National Congress, spoke in a similar vein, "It has been urged—solemnly urged—against our proceedings that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform .. I must confess that the objection seems to be strange seeing that this Congress is composed of the representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of Social Reform must of necessity affect some particular part or some particular community of India only,—and, therefore, gentlemen, it seems to me that, although we Mussulmans have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsi

74 Proceedings, 2nd I N C 1886, p 54

It is remarkable that just as the horizon of the Indian National Congress widened gradually and from mendicant politics it switched on to the politics of agitation so also the horizon of the National Social Conference widened In the beginning it talked only of mild reforms e g removal of restrictions on marriage between members of sub castes belonging to the same caste By 1914 it began to talk of the abolition of castes themselves Addressing the National Social Conference 1914 Madras, the Yuvaraj of Mysore declared that from the point of view of national efficiency the most pressing and distressing problem in India was that caused by caste exclusiveness and hostility and so long as caste continued to be the power that it had been so long anything approaching unity was an impossibility [91] Resolution V of the same session of the Conference regarded the caste distinction in India as baneful to the progress of the country and advocated the abolition of cast system and solicited the Government of India to pass a law declaring the validity of intermarriages in castes and sub castes in the Hindu community [92] Resolution V of the Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1914 also considered the institution of caste in Hindu society as antagonistic to true national unity as a first step towards the abolition of this system it welcomed the efforts made by various castes to amalgamate its sub castes and for the purpose of attaining this unity it called on all social reformers to adopt consciously and persevere in a course of conduct calculated eventually to obliterate the distinctions between castes [93]

The progress was so marked that by 1918 K Natarajan an ardent social reformer and the Editor of the Indian Social Reformer could remark with satisfaction as the President of the Bombay Provincial Social Conference Bijapur that the progress of political ideas in the country had been attended by a steady diminution in the opposition to social reform among the educated and literate classes On such subjects as the

91 Report 2 th N S C pp 4

92 Ibid p 3

93 Report Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1914 p 7

it will not merely be doing justice to individuals but saving itself from destruction [95]

The social reformers refuted indignantly the charge of denationalisation brought against them by certain persons The social reformers themselves had always claimed that they had been working for real national unity It was quite clear that the term national was used in two different senses by the two parties to the controversy By national the social reformer meant that which was calculated to promote a feeling of oneness among the various races and creeds inhabiting this country in the place of the existing state of division and discord Perhaps their critics intended the preservation of the spirit and traditions of the past among the Hindus [96] It would be fairer to say that the critics wanted to do away with the abuses without speaking disparagingly of the past and without making the people suffer under a sense of inferiority complex

There is no denying the fact that the Social Reform Movement was philanthropic as well as patriotic Its aim was no doubt to better the lot of many individuals and classes who suffered from the effects of invidious distinctions based on the accidents of birth or sex or from the consequences of some other circumstances But it should not be forgotten that in bringing about or seeking to bring about this improvement in their condition social reformers tried to render an important service to the nation [97]

Making allowance then for exaggeration and misunderstanding on both sides, it can be stated without any fear of contradiction that Nationalism and Social Reform were interdependent and went side by side Not to speak of others even the three leaders of Extremism Lala Lajpat Rai Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal in the Punjab Maharashtra and Bengal respectively were supporters of social reform in their own way

95 I S R Vol XXIII pp 209 210
96 I S R Vol XIV p 446
97 I S R Vol XVI p 341

References have been made to the social and educational activities of the Arya Samaj. It had a far wider audience than the Brahmo Samaj, and it raised the banner of revolt against social evils, tenacious orthodoxy and an entrenched and crafty priesthood. At the same time it was also imbued with the New Spirit. Lala Lajpat Rai carried forward the ideals of the Samaj in both social and political fields. To him social efficiency was the key to national prosperity.[98] He disagreed with those Hindus who, educated on Western lines, thought that the genius of Hinduism was essentially individualistic and anti-social, and so no substantial reform in social life was possible out of a revival of the past. Hence the Indians, they held, must draw on the West; the new social edifice was to be built on rationality, as distinguished from nationality, in religion and social life.[99] But the question of social reform was, Lalaji believed, of paramount importance to national life and the whole future of the nation depended upon the amount of social efficiency secured and displayed.[100] Social efficiency was necessary for the Hindus to hold their own in the stress and strife of the modern world of competition. No nation as such could be spiritually high or pure which was socially corrupt, degraded or inefficient. So society was to be reformed, but in keeping with the national spirit[101] Like Vivekananda, he thought that there was to be no blind imitation of the West, and there was to be no blind revival of the past. Giving undue prominence to rationalism in any programme of social reform and divorcing it from religion would be dangerous.[102]

In a similar vein Tilak explained his ideas regarding nationalism and social reform in a rejoinder to his criticism by

98. Lala Lajpat Rai has elaborated his idea in a paper '*Social Efficiency*' contributed to the Modern Review, Vol IV, pp 229-236.

99 Rai, Lala Lajpat, '*The Social Genius of Hinduism*' in H R., Vol IX, New Series, p 311

100 Ibid, p 312.

101. Ibid, p 316.

102 Ibid., p 318.

Paranjpye, published in the Bombay Chronicle a year before his death Mr Paranjpye has no clear ideas of the principles of nationalism and has thus misunderstood the character and the nature of Nationalist opposition to the social reform movement as conducted by his party A true Nationalist desires to build on old foundations Reform based on utter disrespect for the old does not appeal to him as constructive work He therefore tries to maintain and foster a distinct *national* interest before undertaking any reform Those that started political agitation in India in the early forties or fifties of the last century thought more of the political privileges than of regeneration of nationality The Nationalist Party of to day looks upon the question from a different stand point *altogether* We don t want to Anglicise our institutions and so denationalise them in the name of social and political reforms We mean to progress and wish our country to occupy a position of equality among the civilised nations of the world But whereas men of Mr Paranjpye s party would ask *us to adopt* alien methods even in offering our prayers to God we the Nationalists desire to emphasize and preserve the national sentiment by giving due credit to all that is good in the old system but without detriment to progress and reform needed for our national uplift If Mr Paranjpye had cared to bear this difference in mind he would not have misrepresented my activities in social reforms The Shivaji festival and the Ganpati festival are in reality means to keep up and maintain a proper pride in the doings of our ancestors and it is sheer misrepresentation to stamp these movements as calculated only to strengthen orthodox prejudices [103]

He further continues, Let me remind him that while the widow marriage movement was at it's height it was myself who proposed to the Reformers to come to a compromise with the Shankaracharya and the leaders of the Hindu orthodoxy on a reasonable basis In my opinion the evil of prohibition of widow remarriage is not a general one but is confined to only

103 Tilak s Rejoinder to Paranjpye in *Bombay Chronicle* reproduced in T V Parvate s *Bal Gangadhar Tilak* pp 479 80

Brahmins and such other castes as have thought fit to imitate Brahmin customs and manners. What I proposed, therefore, was that though widow-remarriage is not sanctioned by the later Hindu Law, yet a compromise could be adopted by including it in the forms of marriage sanctioned by the *Shastras*, and thus removing, with the sanction of the orthodox, all disqualifications arising from social ostracism. I even offered and was prepared to fight this battle myself. But the Reformers would not accept my proposal. In the matter of the depressed and the lower classes I had commenced to act... ..by giving in the *Ganpati* festival an equal status to all backward classes."[104] Tilak was also not opposed to the *Vedokta* ceremony being extended to non-Brahmans. But he was against orthodox Brahmans being forced to officiate as priests in non-Brahman families on pain of forfeiture of '*inams*' granted under the old system. He condemned it as an attack on personal liberty.[105]

B C Pal had all along been a Brahmo Samajist and an ardent social reformer and had, on that account, faced social ostracism and incurred the displeasure of his father. He had bestowed his attention upon social reform as far as possible. He was actively associated with the Sylhat Union, an institution carrying on social work. The Union was doing some practical work in Assam and had since 1881 been diligently exerting itself for the promotion of female education in particular.[106]

Then keeping in view the classification of nationalism by Hayes, and the demarcation of period of nationalism in Indian history by Desai and Chaudhuri, we come to the conclusion that there were three phases of nationalism in India. The first phase since Raja Ram Mohan Roy was universal and liberal, but it did never have contact with the masses. It was confined to the classes and made no appeal to emotion. The second one was revivalist—it had the marks of traditional, liberal, extremist and integral nationalism. The third one was

104 Ibid , p. 480

105 Ibid., p 480.

106 Report, 3rd N.S C., p 36.

orthodox The first stood for social reform but its method and programme were outlandish, rootless and had no touch with the reality of Indian national life The second wanted social reform in keeping with the traditions of India was rather aggressive and militant in reaction against the tone of superiority complex of the Christian missionaries the foreign philanthropists and publicists Among the revivalists the Arya Samajists Swami Vivekananda and the Theosophists all—in spite of their minor differences—stood for the conquest of the world by Indian religion and culture only Indian religion and culture could be the basis of the future civilization of mankind There was now no question of light being carried by the Christian missionaries to India on the contrary it was the West which was to receive light from India Swami Vivekananda and Annie Besant at least accepted that India had to learn something from the West on the plane of materialism and in the field of scientific knowledge [107] but Dayananda was not prepared to accept even that and held that the *Vedas* contained the seeds of all modern scientific knowledge In keeping with this spirit of nationalism the social reform movement after 1885 became more attuned to the national sentiments reached out to a wider section of the people and in turn gave a greater impetus to the nationalist movement

The third also supported social reforms which were in consonance with the tenets of Sanatana Dharma That Malaviya a leader of the orthodox section was in favour of female education has been noted earlier The orthodox were also in favour of curtailment of expenditure at the time of marriage and death and other ceremonies of prohibition and other social purities

All the three currents of nationalism ran side by side between 1885 and 1920 and all of them in varying degrees contributed to the growth of the social reform movement

Mr Sivaswami correctly assessed the situation when addressing the Madras University Convocation in 1914 he said "As in politics there are now three schools of thought which

107 Cf Chap III

SIX

The Agencies of Social Reform

The British rule itself according to Marx was the greatest agency working for social reform in India By breaking the material basis of the secluded isolated and exclusive village communities it was causing a social revolution in India and was working as the unconscious tool of History [1] The earlier conquerors of India Arabs Tartars Turks Muguls had all been in turn conquered by the superior civilisation of the Hindus their subjects The British were the first conquerors superior and therefore inaccessible to Hindoo civilization They destroyed it by breaking up the native communities by uprooting the native industry and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society [2] Marx affirmed that the political unity of India imposed by the British sword and strengthened and perpetuated by the electric telegraph the native army the free press the Zamindari and Ryotwari settlements and in not distant future the combination of railways and steam vessels would awaken India to a new social life and a new future [3]

Chandavarkar was saying as much when he said that selling Soda water was a silent crusade against caste In his opinion the Hindu was in his own interest to adapt himself to changes at first with murmur and then with content The Hindus

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1 Marx *British Rule in India* The New York Daily Tribune June 23 1853 Reproduction in Selected Works Marx and Engels Vol I p 317

2 Marx *Future Results of British Rule in India* The New York Daily Tribune August 3 1853 Reproduced in Ibid p 320

3 Ibid pp 320 3 1

efforts it was desirable in the opinion of the Conference that Provincial Branch Committees be established in each Province with special funds of their own to be devoted to the purpose of employing preachers and publishing tracts collecting information regarding existing social customs and the evils arising therefrom etc and that representative committees should be formed to undertake the work in the course of the current year It was further resolved that the Punjab should take the lead in giving effect to that resolution[8]

The Conference had to fight against age-old prejudices and the progress was painfully slow but there was some ground gained all the same and it noted with satisfaction in 1901 that the Conference had hitherto served the purpose of bringing into a focus the scattered elements of social reform throughout the country and of keeping the cause of social reform steadily before the country's eye It admitted that the cause had immense difficulties and prejudices to contend against, but the social reformers had gone some way in minimising them by diffusing a knowledge of social reform and bringing its friends and admirers together on a common platform[9] Between 1901 and 1920 N G Chandavarkar was the moving spirit behind the Conference just as between 1887 and 1901 Ranade guided its destiny Opposed to blind nationalism, and exhorting his countrymen to cultivate the broad nationalism preached by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other leaders of the theistic movement in India Chandavarkar was more drawn to social and religious reform than political reform though in his view political and social reforms were interdependent Faith in Indian womanhood and faith in the Indian masses were the sheet anchor of his social philosophy[10]

But before we proceed to examine the progress of the Conference under the stewardship of Chandavarkar it is only proper to notice a few features of the Conference between 1887 and 1902 It was marking time during this period which was

8 Report 7th N S C p 43
9 Report 15th N S C p [illegible]
10 Cf his speeches

a period of preparation and propaganda. It was generally influenced by the most burning topic of the region in which it was held. At Madras, it was concerned more with revivalism, at Lucknow its pre occupation was with the Muslim contribution to Indian unity."[11] Ranade had taken meticulous care to make the organisation as broadbased and as representative as was possible under the circumstances. For the purpose of more effective work the country had been demarcated into circles, with a secretary in each circle. In each year's Report of the Conference would appear the names of the Secretaries with the circles. For the sake of illustration, we reproduce the list from the very first Report.

Places		Secretaries
Poona	...	V. M. Bhide, M. G. Ranade.
Bombay	..	Mr. Sadanand Tilak Bhandare.
Calcutta	...	Mr. Narendra Nath Sen.
Bihar	...	Mr. Bisheshwar Singh.
North Western Provinces	..	Lala Baij Nath.
Allahabad	...	Pandit Sri Lal.
Oudh-Lucknow	..	Mr. Hargovind Dayal.
Sitapur	...	Mr. Baldeo Prashad.
Gujrat	..	Mr. Mahipatram Rupram & Mr. Dayaram Gidumal.
Delhi	...	Mr. Girdhari Lal.
Secunderabad	...	Mr. Ramchander Pillai, Government Prosecutor.
Sind	...	Mr. Hiranand Khem Singh.
Azamgarh	...	Mr. Ram Nihora Rai.
Mathura	..	Pandit Radha Charan Goswami.
Amritsar	..	Bawa Narain Singh.
Dera Ismail Khan	..	Lala Giddu Ram.
Madras	...	Mr. Shiva Shanker Pandaya.
Multan	...	Bawa Padman Singh.
South Madras	...	Mr. Guru Swami Sarma

11, Natarajan, S., op. cit, p 94.

Jessore	Mr Jadunath Mazumdar
Berar	Mr Devrao Rao Vinayak
Rajputana	Lala Gopinath Secretary Kayastha Sabha Ajmere
Ceded Districts	Rao Saheb Sri Newas Rao Kesava Pillai Rao
Gurudaspur	Mr Ram Soran
Benares	Baboo Madho Das Rai Sham Kishore
Bareilly	K P Bannerjee
Gazipur	Pandit Arjun
Northern Circars	Shastri Vireshrgam Pantulu
Ambala	Lala Murlidhar
Gorakhpur	Mr Lakshmi Charan
Ballia	Baboo Radhe Singh Prasad Pande[12]

Though Ranade was exerting his utmost to spread the gospel of social reform impatient social reformers represented by *the Indian Spectator* group were not satisfied with its progress and the *Indian Spectator* of June 9 1891, remarked that the Brahmo Samajists and the Arya Samajists had their organisation but the social reform party had even at that time no organisation worth the name There were a lot of association no doubt scattered throughout the country and some of them had been affiliated to the Conference as well but the affiliation was after all nominal *The Indian Spectator* advised the Conference to have at least a permanent Secretary who should go about like Mr Hume who should deliver lectures from time to time who should collect subscriptions and take pledge and unite the various struggling associations with the central body[13]

About the nature of the Conference at Madras in December 1894 the same wrote that that year s social conference appeared to have been a greater success than could be claimed for the

12 Report 3rd N S C p 53
13 I S Vol XI p 447

previous sessions. Perhapes the reason of this was, in its opinion, the absence of the really conservative and the pseudo-conservative elements from the meeting on account of their having come to the conclusion that the movement was neither so earnest nor so powerful as to deserve continuous opposition in the very camp of the opponent. Or the explanation was to be found in the greater advance Madras had given many indications of having achieved in social regeneration. Whatever might have been the case, the Conference adopted that year resolutions which had to be abandoned in previous years and the adoption of which marked a positive advance that year. So far the Social Conference had been pronouncedly opposed to any sort of legislation in social matters, mandatory or permissive, and trusted only to reform from within and to reform without any great break with the existing order of things. But the Madras session assumed a new attitude by passing resolutions congratulating the "Mysore Durbar on its Infant Marriage Bill, and praying to the Government of India so to Amend Act 6 of 1882 as to facilitate social reform associations taking advantage of it and thereby securing an observance of the pledges which the members gave, often to break, when it so suited their purpose.[14]

Again on January 20, 1895, the *Indian Spectator* posed the question if the Social Conference had achieved any tangible success or, like the Indian National Congress, had captured the heart of the people. Ranade had said that social reform had made progress as evidenced by the progress of social reform in the native States, the Caste Conferences and even the readiness of the British Government to enact social legislation. Other reform associations in Madras, Sindh, the Deccan, the Berar and Central Province and the widow re-marriage associations showed, according to Ranade, a decided progress ; but according to the *Indian Spectator* there was not much of practical action as opposed to talk in any of these things. They might be indicating an earnest desire, but that desire was still a Platonic one, incapable of producing tangible results. What

14 I. S., Vol. XV, p 8.

was required was acts instead of associations, real martyrdom instead of speeches The *Indian Spectator* lamented that there was still too much of apathy and lethargy too much of half heartedne s Perhaps the Social Conference had lost in depth in its attempt to gain in breadth It deplored that the view that social reform must come from within and must come slowly that in order that it should take a sure footing amongst the people the talking stage must long exist before decided action was taken, and that care should be taken not to make too wide a gulf between the progressionist and the inertmasses had obtained too powerful an acceptance by the Conference In theory talk must precede action and public opinion must be prepared before great changes were made But there was a limit to it after which all talks must cease and when mere talk would discredit the movements by casting doubts on the earnestness of leaders The stage of martyrdom which alone could do good had definitely come over India [15] The time had definitely come when the doctrine of self sacrifice individual or united should be preached openly as the most effective stimulant to progress social or political [16]

The Indian Spectator had always differences with the methods adopted by the Conference whose remedies it considered too mild for the diseases it (the Conference) sought to cure It had always remained an innocent body assuming shape for a day and passing resolutions couched in the blandest terms on social questions But the *Indian Spectator* conceded even the Conference had rendered useful services to the country in its own way There was enough to show that the fight for social reform was by no means a losing fight The work was slowly advancing but in that the Conference had a hand It was the Conference which first raised social reform to a level of equality with political progress It was the Conference which finally broke down the provincial character which had attached to previous attempts in that line and given it a national name and scope In a way all subsequent movements

15 I S Vol XV p ..?
16 Ibid p ..3

in favour of social reform owed their inspiration to the Conference. The Social Conference made it a point to be as conciliatory as possible. It was regrettable that inspite of all this a small clique of hyper-orthodox individuals in Poona were going about intriguing against the Social Conference being held in 1895 in the Congress Pandal as usual.[17]

The opposition to the Conference, in the opinion of the *Indin Spectator*, was due to the following cause, "Perhaps the Conference has given offence to some Congressmen by passing the resolution on public life and private character last year. It was a rebuke to the majority of Congress delegates for their conduct in reference to a certain incident. The leaders of the Conference were powerless in the affair. They objected, hesitated, evaded. But the indignation caused by the incident developed to unexpected dimensions, and the leaders could not but yield place to the resolution on the subject without seriously compromising the principles which the Conference advocated.[18]

But the *Indian Spectator* welcomed the denial by the Congress of the use of its Pandal by the Conference. It hailed the incident as the emancipation of the Conference as an independent movement, standing on its own legs,and speaking in terms of earnestness.Thenceforward, it would have the active sympathy and energetic co-operation of all true friends of reform.[19] In the opinion of the *Indian Spectator* the report of the 9th Social Conference at Poona, 1895, showed the strength the movement had gained by its divorce from the Congress. It might be inferred from the fact that there were as many as 797 delegates, many of them having been elected at public meetings; as also from the general earnestness prevailing in the speeches delivered, the most impressive of them, all being that of the practical reformer, Dr. Bhandarkar.[20]

17. Ibid , XV , p 730.

18 Ibid., p. 730.

19. Ibid p. 966.

20 I S., Vol. XVI., p. 955

The impatient social reformers were constantly harping on the tune that the movements for social and polit cal reform must be completely separate Thus on January 9 1898 a Social Reformer wrote to the *Indian Spectator* about the Social Conference of 1897 the social movement should be sepa rated from the political and that the time has now come when social reformers should not remain content with having the Conference as an humble appendage of the Congress meeting by permission and favour, and rather indulged in as a necessary evil or a harmless farce than a thing of first importance and vital necessity as it ought to be regarded at least by those who believe that without a thorough social regeneration our projects of political amelioration are sure to prove but an empty dream The two movements should have separate times and places of meetings and should have different workers At any rate this would secure division of labour and that will mean *more thorough work It was also incongrous to do any real* work in connection with social reform under the present arrange ments which take away the first energies for the Congress and leave only one day for the deliberations of the Conference So much work is compressed into one day s proceeding that it is impossible to do justice to any of the subjects The assembly becomes a mere registering and confirming body—often doing so blindly and without the strong faith that deliberate convic tion after reasoning begets matters should be so far improv ed as to give to the Conference as much time eclat and first importance as is given to her more catching and dazzling but not more productive sister—the Congress [21]

But in spite of the dissentient voices raised Ranade con tinued to follow the middle course he would not quarrel with political workers he would not go too fast and he would use the Caste Conference also for furthering the cause of social re form After his death when Chandavarkar became the General Secretary of the Conference it became dynamic aggressive and radical In October, 1902 first steps were taken to set up a Central Social Reform Association which would co ordinate

21 I S Vol XVIII p 2

reform work and function as the permanent organisation of the Social Conference.[22] The Social Conference reached out to the States also. V.P. Madhav Rao, who became Diwan of Mysore in 1903, had come to the Conference in 1902, the Gaekwar came next year and towards the end of the decade, the Maharaja of Nabha came forward to preside over its session.[23] The special feature of the Social Conference at Surat, 1907 was that among the speakers there were four Hindu ladies, and a somewhat unusual feature of the proceedings was that there were also a few Mohammedan speakers. *The Indian Spectator* welcomed it as desirable that more and more Mohammedans should patronise the Social Conference in future.[23a]

As the century advanced, new force came into play, the scope of social reform widened, and reconstruction of the Conference began to be urged by enthusiastic people. In its editorial of the 21st January, 1912, the Indian Social Reformer remarked, "The Social Conference is in urgent need of reconstruction. The first and most urgent respect in which a change is desirable is that it should no longer meet at the fag end of the National Congress session .....It is felt that such an occasion can be more fully utilised to discuss means and methods and to get into intimate touch with earnest workers than a hurried and formal meeting annexed to a political Conference. The National Social Conference, on its present lines, has no doubt been extremely serviceable, but the temper and conditions of social reform have become transformed, owing largely to the work of the Conference itself, and a reconstruction of its methods has become imperative. Everybody is fully aware by this time of the evils of female illiteracy, infant marriage, enforced widowhood, restrictions on sea-voyage, and rigid caste divisions. The *Shastras* authorities and the secular reasons for reform in these respects have been sufficiently lectured and written upon. And, what is more, the number of educated women, of rational marriages, of foreign travelling persons,

22 Natarajan, S., op. cit., p. 95.
23 Ibid., p. 109
23a. I S. Vol., XXVI, p. 3

and of persons who disregard the caste rules in many unwholesome particulars has greatly increased Resolutions advocating the education of women or condemning infant marriage seem to many a sad waste of time in these days Apart from the progress made in the last twenty five years the whole theory of public life had undergone radical change in the West and by infiltration in India also The philosophy of social service has never been so elaborately ably and alluringly presented as in the numerous volumes which some of the shrewdest and soundest thinkers of our time have written in the last few years We seem at last to have got to the common basis of politics and religion—the two great attractions of the human mind Behind this philosophy of social service, is a vast educational movement which insists on practical work as the most direct and enduring means of knowledge A worker in the social field gets many side lights and is susceptible to many inspirations from which the people who theorise for or against social reform are entirely cut off This doctrine is deeply penetrating Indian education and is already beginning to penetrate our public life The National Social Conference we have no doubt will readily adapt itself to the change so hopeful and full of promise for the country s future We have had for very many years theory before practice Now is the turn of practice before theory [24]

The need for the better organisation of the work of the National Social Conference was felt so keenly that in *July* 1912, N G Chandavarkar (the General Secretary) and G K Devadhar and D G Dalvi (Assistant Secretaries) issued a draft scheme for this purpose and laid down that for this purpose an organised and persistent effort was to be made in the direction of (*a*) instructing the popular mind (*b*) widely diffusing ideas of social reform (*c*) formulating well informed and influential public opinion (*d*) focussing it by means of Conferences—both National and Provincial—meeting every year and (*e*) making the popular enthusiasm about advanced social questions run into channels of well defined and

24 I S R *Vol* XXII p 243

well-regulated activities all over the country in the form of institutions.[25]

The fulfilment of these aims depended upon several factors, such as, a well-planned and vigorous organisation with branches all over the land, devoted and earnest minded voluntary workers having full faith in the steadily advancing side of social evolution in the country, funds (*a*) to carry on the work of propagandism by means of lectures, literature and occasional demonstrations, (*b*) to finance weaker branches or centres, so as to enable them to employ paid workers, (*c*) to subsidise institutions started with the specific purpose of promoting questions of social reform, and (*d*) to train a band of social missionaries who would undertake the work of social regeneration.[26]

To begin with, the institution of National Social Conference was to be reorganised and its work was to be put on a sound and systematic basis, by opening a regular office in Bombay where the two Assistant Secretaries lived. The work was to be divided and carried on regularly with the assistance and guidance of a Board of Councillors. The General Secretary was to exercise general supervision and direct the Assistant Secretaries in the discharge of their functions The Board of Councillors who would lay down the lines of work should meet once a month and regular minutes of their discussions were to be kept. The Assistant Secretaries were to divide between themselves the work of organisation of branches or centres and their programme, correspondence, and preparation and distribution of literature. *The Indian Social Reformer* was considered to be as the accredited organ of the National Social Conference and efforts were to be made to enlist the sympathies of other journals and specially the vernacular papers all over the country in the cause of social reform The members of the Board and the Assistant Secretaries were to arrange and undertake lecture tours, and special steps were to be taken to bring together men and women friendly to social reform to form 'District Committees' There were to be

25. I L. M , Vol XIII. p 13.
26 Ibid , p 13

several Sub Committees with members from outside provinces who would do their work by correspondence One of such committees was to be called a 'Legislative Sub Committee' whose work would be to give a lead to discussion on questions involving legal issues The Assistant Secretaries were also to collect as much information as was possible from all over the country relating to the advance made by social problems that seriously engaged the minds of the people with the help of one of the Sub Committees formed for the purpose of collecting such information from various provinces They were also to be responsible for the better organisation of the National Social Conference meeting every year and were also to see that the resolutions passed at its meetings were properly given effect to [27]

The items of work to be first undertaken were —(a) organisation or reinforcement of Provincial Social Reform Associations (b) organisation of District Social Reform Com mittees to be undertaken first in the Presidency of Bombay (c) affiliation of Social Reform Bodies other than those mentioned in *a* and *b* (d) preparation of a list of institutions in the country carrying on the work of furthering Social Reform in the fields of education and elevation of women marriage reform widow re marriage, social work by women abolition of *purdah* system, elevation of the Depressed Classes fusion of castes and sub castes by interdining and inter marriage relations between various Communities in India, foreign travel temperance social purity communal charities or religious endowments and (e) collecting reports from various institutions and bodies working in these fields [28]

Any one who was in sympathy with any five of the above mentioned reforms was to be called a sympathiser A member of the various Associations and Committees affiliated to the Conference paying an annual contribution of Rs 25/ in the case of a Provincial Association and Rs 10/ in the case of District or affiliated Committee was to subscribe to at least five from

27 *Ibid* pp 13 14
28 Ibid p 14

among the first seven of the above mentioned items of social reform and was to endeavour to create public opinion regarding these by precept and example. A Sub-Committee was to be formed to frame a constitution for the National Social Conference for being adopted at it s next meeting [29]

Not only the National Social Conference was to be reconstructed, but its scope and activities also were to be extended In his message to the Social Reform Conference, 1919, Chandavarkar affirmed that the time had come when the meaning and scope of social reform was to be enlarged and the outlook and activity of social reformers was to be extended to such questions, as the education of the masses, the sanitation of the country, the housing of the poor, the care of the sick and the feeble, the employment of labour on rational lines, the provision of healthy recreation and amusement for the masses, village sanitation and rural education. He added that it should no longer be confined to female education, widow re-marriage, removal of caste restrictions and such other items.[29a]

The main achievement of the National Social Conference, however, lies not in what it itself did for the promotion of social reform, but in what it stimulated others to do. Many Reform Associations sprang all over the country, the most important and numerous of them all being the Caste Conferences. These Conferences had their origin in the National Social Conference. Not that these Caste Conferences were founded by a resolution of the National Social Conference, rather they were founded by imitation [30]

Besides the Caste Conferences, there were many other bodies which carried on work of social reform in their limited areas in their own ways. The Reports of the National Social Conference would publish the lists of these organisations year after year. To take a few examples, in 1891, following were the Associations spread all over the country whose objects were to promote social reform among Hindus .—

29 Ibid , p 14,

29a. Quoted in S Natarajan, op cit, pp. 134-'35.

30 From a speech delivered by Mr Narayana Prasada Ashthana at the meeting of the Dharm Mahotsava, Muttra, H.R , Vol. IX. p. 154.

Name of the Place	*Name of the Association*
Madras	Hindu Marriage Association
Bellary	Sanmarga Samaj
Secunderabad	Hindu Social Reform Association
Dharwar	Sammilani Sabha
Chikurde (Satara District)	Social Reform Association
	India Fund Association—Social Reform Branch
Sholapur	Hindu Union
Poona	Arya Dharma Prakashika Sabha
	Social Reform Association
Nasik	Oswald Hitkarini Sabha
Bombay	Widow Marriage Association
	Hindu Union
	Pathare Prabhu Association
,,	Jain Association
	Brahmin Sabha
Akola	Berar Association
Surat	Anvila Brahmin Association (Desais)
Surat	Anvila Brahmin s Association (Bathilas)
Hyderabad (Sind)	Sind Social Reform Association
Lahore	Widow Marriage Association
	Hindu Sabha
	Guru Singh Sabha
	Kayastha Sabha
Quetta	Band of Hope Baluchistan
Ajmere	Walterkrit Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha
,,	Kayastha Sabha
,,	Jain Sabha
	Agarwala Sabha
	Adi Goud Brahmin Sabha

Name of the Place	*Name of the Organisation*
Mathura	.. Goud Brahmin Sabha.
,,	.. Kayastha Sabha
,,	. Agarwala Sabha,
Gorakhpur	. Kayastha Sabha.
,,	. Temperance Association.
Gazipur	.. Kayastha Sabha.
,,	.. High Caste Reform Society.
Bareilly	The Sadharma Amrit Vardhini Sabha.
,,	. Kayastha Sabha.
,,	.. Brahmin Sabha.
Allahabad	. Kayastha Sabha.
,,	. Hindu Samaj
Sylhet	Sylhet Union.
Ballia	.. Kayastha Sabha
Calcutta	. Indian Reform Association.

Northern Indian Kayastha Conference [31]

The Report of the 5th National Social Conference adds one more name to the list just given —

Name of the Place	*Name of the Organisation*
Sircy	. Haig Hitvardhini Association.[32]

The Report of the 9th National Social Conference by adding some more names to the list already existing, made it formidable :—

Name of the Place	*Name of the Organisation*
Madras	Hindu Social Reform Association.
Rajahmundri	... Widow Marriage Association.
Chikakur	Hindu Social Reform Association.
Masulipatam	. Social Purity Association,
Tiruveli	. Hindu Social Reform Association.

31 Report, 4th N.S.C., App. pp 60-62

32 Report, 5th N.S.C., App p 27

Name of the Place	*Name of the Organisation*
Madura	Madura Social Union
Bangalore	Social Reform Association
Palghat	Boys Marriage Reform Association
Salem	National Indian Association
Cuddalore	National Indian Association
Coimbatore	National Indian Association
Gulbarga	Social Reform Association
Satara	Sivaji Club
Dhulia	Hindu Association
Poona	Deccan Female Home Education Society
	Agarkar Club
	Widow Marriage Association
Sholapur	Saraswati Mandir
Bombay	Aryan Social Union
	Bhatia Mitra Mandal
	Arya Dharma Prakash
„	Ladies Club
„	Kshetri Union Club
Ahmedabad	Hindu Samsar Sudharak Samaj
	Widow Marriage Association
Berar	Social Reform Association
Nagpur	Friends Social Union
Lahore	Khatri Sabha
	Kashmiri Pandit Sabha
	Sami Sabha
	Kekarni Sabha
	Bhera Anand Sabha
	Purity Association
„	Temperance League
„	Shudhi Sabha
Agra	Bhargava Sabha [33]

The number of such Associations continued to multiply and it is not possible to enumerate them all We shall end with

33 Report 9th N S C App pp 171 173

the addition of a few names from the Report of the 10th National Social Conference :—

Name of the Place	*Name of the Organisation*
Godavari	Godavari District Conference.
Godavari	Shri Vaishnava Conference.
Karad	Bhakta Samaj.
Hali Sahar	Kaulinya Pratha Samashodhini Sabha.[34]

It must have been evident from the foregoing list that most of the Reform Associations were Caste Associations and that these Caste Associations were doing some useful work at that time. Conferences of Brahmans and Brahman Sub-Castes, Kshatriyas, Rajputs, Vaishyas, Kayasthas and Kayastha Sub-Castes, Vellalas, Reddys, Nairs, Jats, Patidars, Daivadnyas and Namasudras etc. came into existence. They wanted to defend the whole of Hinduism, and within that wider object their own caste-privileges They were fired by a strong desire to promote the prosperity of the caste which necessitated the introduction of such reforms as might help the caste in the difficult existing circumstances [35]

Those people who were associated with Caste Conferences held firmly that the Caste Conferences were necessary under the existing circumstances. Thus Mr. Hargovind Dayal, a leading member of the Kayastha Conference, said in his speech as Chairman of the 13th National Social Conference, 1899, that the Vaishyas, the Khatris, the Bhargava Brahmans and the Rajputs all followed in the wake of the Kayastha Conference and were trying to better the social health of their communities. It was only natural. India was made up of a congeries of castes and sub-castes, observing an innumerable variety of customs and usages So if India was to be unified and regenerated, reform must begin with the units of which she was composed. It was impossible for all units to be reformed on the same lines. The general principles guiding them would be the same, but they must

34 Report, 10th N S. C. App. pp. 153-154.
35 Farquhar, J N , op. cit., p. 308.

differ in the details of their operations So the Caste Conferences were necessary to work out the details of reform for the respective castes and the National Social Conference was necessary to record the progress which the several communities made in the cause of Social Reform from year to year and to enunciate the general principles on which the reform work was to be carried on in future [36]

At the same Conference the President Rai Bahadur Lala Baijnath expressed the view that the Social Conference had given initiative to the Bhargava Vaishya and Rajput Caste Conferences which were working in the direction of social reform Even the conservative Brahman had been imbued with the spirit of reform and the Gaud Sanadhya Chaturvedi and Kashmiri Brahman Conferences had come into existence [37] Mr M V Joshi expressed similar views on Caste Conferences when he said While noticing the tendency of Caste Conferences to sectarianism one cannot help thinking that they are on the whole useful for furtherance of the cause of Social Reform Most of the leaders of these Caste Conferences are fully alive to the danger of these institutions being oblivious of the larger communal good and take care to avoid this evil Barring this evil tendency the Caste Conferences do achieve a certain amount of progress They have a distinct advantage of concentrating attention on the evils of a particular community with reference to their stage of development and appeal to individual members of that community with much greater intensity '[37a]

But the advanced social reformers were always of the view that caste must be done away with and that caste was the greatest evil in Indian Social life *The Indian Spectator* wrote on September 13 1891 "The institution of caste is undoubtedly at the root of much of the degraded condition of this country and so long as it exists there is very little chance of its people making any thing like a marked progress [38] Criticising those reformers who

36 Report 13th N S C p 8
37 Ibid pp 14 15
37a Report Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1914
38 I S Vol XI p 726

spoke and wrote patronisingly of Caste Conferences in Northern India, *The Indian Social Reformer* wrote on December 14, 1902, that it had maintained a consistent attitude of depreciation against them. It quoted the Kayastha Samachar which wrote very candidly, "The Caste Conferences in upper India have done not a little mischief in fostering and intensifying, however unconsciously, that exclusiveness which is the inevitable characteristic of caste institutions. Let us hope, however, that the new spirit of national and corporate life would go a long way stamping out the baneful results of caste antagonisms, at least in affairs of public life" In the opinion of the *Indian Social Reformer* caste was not the only dividing influence in the land and it advocated that the social reform movement should sternly discourage every dividing influence in society.[39] *The Indian Social Reformer* again bitterly wrote against the Caste Conference, "The idea of Caste Conferences has always been repugnant to us, even when they have for their object the prosecution of social reforms. The caste sentiment is so ingrained in the Hindu mind, it so deeply pervades every fibre of our being, and it so thoroughly colours our outlook, that it seems to us that the only effective course for those who wish to see this state of mind altered, is resolutely to cut themselves off from any thing savouring of the idea."[40] But sometime afterwards the *Indian Social Reformer* modified its position, took a more balanced view of the situation and conceded that after all the caste conference might not have been all baneful. Judging by the broad lines on which the resolutions passed at the annual gatherings of most of those bodies were based, there was good reason to think that they all tended to the propagation of liberal ideas on religious and social questions throughout the land[41]

A more balanced view would be that the Caste Conferences were a necessity of the time and their scope was limited. Any violent and sudden change would have alienated the people and

39. I S R , Vol. XIII, p 136.

40 I.S R., Vol XX, p 423

41. I.S R., Vol XXI, p 241.

thus thwarted the cause of reform One uniform and inflexible rule for all castes and creeds and their numerous sub divisions with varying customs and manners would not have been then suitable It was on some such considerations that the Caste Conference movement took its birth and continued to carry on [42] But its greatest defects were that its scope was limited and it *avoided controversial matter* [43] *It further excluded religious* reform from its platform [44] It sharpended social distinctions bred a sense of exclusiveness and animosity between the various communities and divided and disunited the Indian people at a time when united co-operation was most needed *It was rather ironical that when reformers were trying to abolish the caste system* caste was the very basis of Caste Conference [45]

Whatever might be said in favour of or against Caste Conference one thing was certain that Ranade was an enthu siastic supporter of Caste Conference According to N Lakshmanan Indeed, in the sacred task of advancing social reform the system of encouraging and helping the formation of *caste conferences throughout the land seems to have been one of* Mr Ranade s favourite methods The question of caste Confe rence has been if I may say so the burden of his song [46] And if by way of sample we examine the aims and objects and work of a few of the Caste Conferences we shall find that Ranade was more than justified in his optimism under the circumstances

The earliest of the Caste Conferences was organised by the Kayasthas [46a] A representative national assembly of the Chitra

42 Narayana Prasad Ashthana op cit *H R* p *155*

43 Ibid p *156*

44 Idid. p 157

45 Ibid p *158 Also see Dr Sachchidanaoda Sinha s Presidential Address* at the Kayastha Conference held at Delhi 29th March 1929 Reproduced in H R Vol LII pp *54 57*

46 I.S R Vol XXIV p 494

46a This statement needs to be qualified in that these caste meetings had taken place earlier but those meetings were sporadic and not regular The Kayastha Conference was the first Caste Conference to be organised on a large scale and to be held regularly thereafter

guptavanshi' Kayasthas, called the Kayastha Conference, was established in 1887, with the object of spreading education, sowing the seeds of union, introducing Social Reform and advancing the material prosperity of the Kayasthas[47] The sessions of the Kayastha Conference continued to be held year after year. The second session was held at Allahabad in September, 1888, with a view to removing (*a*) the evils of dowry, (*b*) extravagance on wedding and other occasions and (*c*) early marriages. The 3rd Kayastha Conference was held at Bankipore, Patna, on November, 6, 1889.

It is remarkable that the Kayastha Conference was also interested in the material prosperity of the Kayasthas; for the 4th Kayastha Conference at Lahore on October 2, 1890, among other things, also aimed at gaining material prosperity by the adoption of commercial and other respectable pursuits.[48] Adoption of commercial pursuits was one of the avenues advocated for the acquisition of wealth. At the 6th Kayastha Conference at Ajmere in 1892, a certain articles of Kayastha manufacture were exhibited to the audience.[49]

The Kayasthas had many local associations which carried on work of social reform in limited areas. For example Kayastha Sabhas were convened in Bareilly regularly to discuss the eradication of the following evils . (*a*) the practice of child-marriage (*b*) money stipulations at marriage, (*c*) extravagant expenditure at marriages, funerals etc., (*d*) intoxicating beverages (*e*) the marriages of men above 50, (*f*) concubinage and prostitution, (*g*) gambling and bribery, and (*h*) polygamy in general The objects of the Association were to encourage education, unity, trade as opposed to service, sea voyages, fixing the minimum marriageable age of girls at 12 and of boys at 16, decision of civil suits by caste committees and raising the general moral tone of society. The Conference, however, declared that it had nothing to do with matters political and religious.[50] Similarly in Rajputana,

47 Report, 3rd N.S.C , p 107
48. Report 4th N S C., App. pp 16-17.
49. Report, 7th N S C., p 63
50 Report, 4th N S C , App p 16.

there were 36 Kayastha Sabhas working for the advancement of the Kayastha Community under the direction of the Provincial Sabha with headquarters at Ajmere The obj ct was to introduce social reforms among the Kayasthas [51]

The Kayastha social movement was a well organised affair with several organs at its disposal to propagate its message The Kayastha National papers run in English Urdu and Hindi were (*a*) The Kayastha Agra (*b*) The Kayastha Conference Gazette Cawnpur (*c*) The Kayastha Samachar Allahabad (*d*) The Kayastha Hitkari Gwalior (*e*) The Kayastha Patrika Lucknow (*f*) The Kayastha Conference Prakash Cawnpur [52] Added to this list, there was the *Bihar Guardian* [53]

The Kayastha Conference had nine special committees to carry on reforms in different spheres of life of the Kayasthas (1) Kayastha Temperance Society (2) Kayastha Vegetarian Society (3) Kayastha Clubs Association (4) Kayastha Trade Association (5) Kayastha Marriage Provident Fund (6) Kayastha Mutual Family Pension Fund (7) Society for curtailing Marriage expenses and reforming bad social usages (8) National Fund Association (9) Newspaper Sub Committee [54]

The Kayastha Conference gained strength from year to year, and in addition to the above the following branches of the Kayastha Sadar Sabha also came into existence (1) The Kayastha Education Committee Aligarh (2) The Kayastha Economic Association Bankipore (3) The Kayastha Reform Committee Moradabad (4) The Kayastha Conference Jagir Committee Gaya There were Kayastha Trading Companies at Lucknow and Sitapur Kayastha Companies at Dumraon and *Gorakhpur a Kayastha bank at* Delhi and the Kayastha Messenger Co of Gaya [55]

Of the Kayastha Educational Institutions the first and foremost was the Kayastha Pathshala Allahabad which was one

51 Report 5th N S C App p 5
52 Report 10th N S C App p 12
53 Report 11th N S C App p 61
54 Ibid App p 59
55 Report 15th N S C App p 107

of the best managed colleges in Upper India. It maintained an excellent monthly magazine, the Kayastha Samachar, which under the able management of Mr. (later on Dr.) S. Sinha, Bar-at-Law, made wonderful progress and was indisputably acknowledged to be the best literary periodical in Upper India. Kayastha schools also existed in Gaya, Sikandarabad, Khairabad and a few other places, besides scores of social clubs doing more or less useful work.[56]

Besides the Kayasthas, other castes were also organised for promoting social reforms. In the North-Western Provinces there were the Vaishya Sabha, the Bhargava Sabha, the Agarwal Sabha etc. The Kayastha community deputed Pandit Lakshmi Narayan in 1893 to represent them at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago (America).[57]

The aims of the Vaishya Sabha, at the 4th Vaishya Conference at Mathura, were declared to be the settlement of petty disputes and differences by arbitration, the promotion of Sanskrit learning, and of female education, the abolition of the pernicious system of early marriages, improvement of the physique of Vaishya boys, reduction of unnecessary expenditure at the time of marriage and death ceremonies, discouragement of *nautch* parties, prohibition of the sale of girls, and of unequal marriages, promotion of total abstinence, giving help to the poor members of the caste, promotion of industrial and commercial activities, encouragement of foreign travel [58]

The Khatris were permeated with a similar spirit. The Sarins were an important section of the Punjab Khatris The first Sarin Sabha was started in 1882 for promoting union and social reform, for example, curtailing extravagant expenditure in connection with marriage and funeral ceremonies. The first Sarin Conference was held in 1889, and Lala Amolik Rama was its Chairman.[59] Then through the efforts of Lala Hiralal Kappor

56 Ibid , App p 107

57 Report, 7th N S C , p 57

58 Report, 10th N S C , App p 59

59 Report, 7th N.S C', p 60

proprietor of the Khatri Samachar a General Khatri Sabha consisting of members of all sections of Khatris was organised in November 1893 [60]

Even conservative Rajputana could not escape the blast of social reform *In 1888 was held at Ajmere a meeting of Sardars* Officials and Charans from all parts of Rajputana for the purpose of adopting some rules for regulating the expenditure on marriage and funeral ceremonies among the Rajputs Col C K N Walter Agent to the Governor General for Rajputana very actively interested himself in the cause of Social Reform in Rajputana [61] Elaborate observances restricting marriage and funeral expenses were prescribed and they were to be binding on Rajputs of all ranks excepting the ruling Chiefs [62]

Thus came into existence the Walterkrit Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha about which the *Bombay Gazette* of the 3rd November, 1891 said Colonel Trevor rightly gives all prominence to the wholesome activity of the Walterkrit Sabha which had made *more practical contributions towards social reform than any* organisation in India A spontaneous resolution on the part of the leading Rajputs of the Province that girls are not to marry before the age of 14 or men below the age of 18 is an incident of no small interest emphasized as it was by the Jaypore Maharaja s hearty concurrence with the Age Bill In Bikanir the desire of the Sabha that the movement should be extended to castes other than Rajputs has been in part fulfilled for the Brahmins of the city have submitted themselves to a set of rules limiting the cost of funeral feasts to Rs 500, and the expense *of marriages to* Rs 400 for sons and Rs 300 for daughters and prohibiting presents to the brides father The Bikanir Brahmins have also agreed that no marriage shall take place where either party is under 11 the limit being placed lower than amongst the Rajputs in other parts of the province because in Bikanir the Brahmins have marriages only once in five years [63]

60 Ibid p 61
61 Gidumal Dayaram *The Status of Women in India* p 233
62 Ibid p 237
63 Quoted in Report I N S C App p 6

The Walterkrit Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha continued to do useful work during the subsequent years. In February, 1900, the Annual meeting of the Rajput Mahasabha was held at Agra with the Hon'ble Raja Rampal Singh,[63a] in the chair. One hundred and fifty Rajputs from all parts of India were present. Among the resolutions passed, there was one recommending the creation of complete unity among the Rajputs in the whole of India by the removal of social hindrances and the cultivation of brotherly feeling and sympathy. Another resolution recommended that steps be taken for the spread of education among the Rajputs and for impressing upon them the necessity of contriving means of livelihood apart from the zamindari, civil, and military services. A third recommended that endeavours be made to put a stop to the demanding of heavy dowries by the bridegroom from the guardians of the birde, to polygamy, to early marriage, to taking a large number of persons in marriage processions, engaging dancing girls and mimics, having pyro-technic displays and lavishly and ostentatiously scattering money to the public, to the marriage of under-aged spinsters to aged widowers, and to the use of intoxicants.[63x]

Similarly, to name but a few, the Kanya Kubja Sabha, Kala Kankar, was established in 1899 in order to improve the existing position of the Kanyakubja Brahmans, and introduce social reforms among them[63b] The Gaud Mahasabha was established in 1896 with the avowed object of introducing social reform into the community of Goud Brahmans of the Punjab and North-Western Provinces.[63c] The Mohiyal Mitra Sabha, Lahore, was founded with a view to (*a*) abolishing evil customs, (*b*) cutting down the expenditure and (*c*) helping widows and indigent boys[63d]

The Caste Conferences and Sabhas were too many to be

63a Rampal Singh was an outstanding figure for a long time in the Congress circles He was a true patriot and a sincere social reformer.

63x I S.R , Vol X , p 225

63b Report, 14th N S C , App p 34

63c Ibid , App p 37.

63d Ibid., App. p 69

all mentioned here They continued to be very active during the first two decades of the twentieth century as well They had all the same aims and objects and were very particular about advancing the interests of their members Thus the Bhumihar Brahman Mahasabha[63e] at its eleventh sitting held at Dehrighat (October 1906) in the District of Azamgarh under the president ship of Babu Indra Narayan Sinha passed resolutions advocating the cause of education both secular and religious by the establishment of schools and boarding houses female education on national lines prevention of early marriage support to help-less widows and orphans unity and Panchayat marriage reform creation of national fund formation of local Sabhas and preaching missions and the establishment of bank and prepara tion of directory[64]

Besides these Caste Conferences there were many com munal regional and religious organisations which were carrying on agitation for social reform The Liberal Club was established at Ahmednagar in January 1893 with a view to furthering the moral, mental and physical advancement of its members[65]

The Deccan Liberal Association Poona had the same aims and objects as the National Social Conference had for the whole of India It was especially concerned with awakening public opinion as to the necessity of Home Education and discipline of boys and girls as being the basis of all other education marriage question (curtailing expenses, encouraging late marriages and intermarriages among sub divisions of the same Caste) removal of social hindrances in the way of foreign travel reform in female education both in its higher and lower branches with a view to making it more popular prohibition of the use of intoxicating drugs and liquors the problems of one common language promotion of popular education by means of lecture on scientific and other useful subjects the improvement of the

63e The Bhumihar Brahmans had earlier held their meetings in different parts of Bihar and Eastern North Western Provinces and advocated far reaching social reforms

64 I S R Vol XVII p 77

65 Report 9th N.S.C. App p 38

unhappy condition of the Hindu Child Widows and the promotion of their education with a view to training them to be useful members of the family and the society to which they belonged, emphasising the necessity of moral instruction and discipline with a view to the elevation of the tone of society and the question of Elementary Free Education.[65a]

Even before the establishment of the National Social Conference, had been founded the Hindu Social Reform Association with its Registered Office at Hyderabad, Sind, with the following aims and objects :—(1) the prevention of premature marriages (2) the reduction of marriage expenses, (3) the promotion of female education, and the improvement of the status of women, (4) the doing of all other lawful things as were incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.[66] There were to be four divisions of members. The first division was to consist of those who would agree (1) not to marry their sons, or any other male relations under their control or guardianship, below the age of 16, and in each case of breach by them thereafter of such agreement, to pay to the Association a sum of Rs. 500/- or any less sum adjudged by the division after giving such persons an opportunity of being heard in their defence, (2) not to take from the family of any bride whom any of their sons or such other relation should marry, any marriage or other presents in excess of any scale that might be laid down by the first division of members, and in each case of breach by them thereafter of such agreement, to pay to the Association a sum not exceeding double the excess which might be adjudged by the division after giving such opportunity as aforesaid, (3) to educate all their female children to the best of their ability and in case of their failure to teach them or to have them taught at least reading and writing and simple arithmetic, to pay to the Association a sum not less than Rs 50/- which might be adjudged after giving such opportunity as aforesaid, (4) to pay a subscription of not less than 2 as. monthly or 1 Rupee a year in advance.[67]

65a Report, 10th N S C , App pp 66-67

66. Gidumal Dayaram, *The Status of Women in India*, pp 272-'78.

67 Ibid , p 275.

The second division was to consist of those persons who agreed to all the above clauses except the second The third division was to consist of those persons who merely sympathised with the objects of the Association and agreed to pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs 6/ or a monthly subscription of not less than 8 annas The fourth division was to consist of Honorary Members elected on account of their liberality towards the Association or for eminent services to the cause of social reform or female education No Honorary Member was to be bound by the Memorandum of Association or these articles None but the Hindus of Sind were eligible for the first three divisions but this limitation did not apply to the fourth division [68]

The Gujrat Hindu Social Reform Association was established at Ahmedabad in 1887 through the exertions of Dayaram Gidumal The Association offered a salary of Rs 35/ per mensem to any competent preacher of social reform Mr Ganpatram Rajaram a poet and school master was appointed to the post for a year After his resignation Shastri Nageshwar Jeshtaram was nominated to the post He gave lectures against the custom of infant marriages at Ahmedabad Mehmedabad, Naddiad Baroda etc [69]

In Berar an Association was formed in 1890 under Rai Bahadur S B Jathar Director of Public Instruction The articles of the Association were (1) not to get their sons married before they attained the age of 20 or 19 or 18 or 17 or 16 or 15 (2) not to marry daughters before the age of 12 11 10 9 or 8 (3) not to allow the difference between the ages of husband and wife to be more than 20 years (4) not to marry after 40 years of age (5) to try to remove all difficulties in the way of inter marriages between Konkanastha Karada and Deshastha Sub sections of Brahmans and not to object to marriages with families who favoured intermarriages between these sub sections (6) not to incur marriage expenditure exceeding six month s

68 Ibid pp 275-276

69 Report 4th N.S.C. App p 18

income in the case of son and one year's income in the case of daughter, (7) to do one's best to encourage female education, and (8) not to drink liquor.[70]

Started in 1892, the Hindu Social Reform Association, Madras, also did good work. Its main objects were female education and marriage reforms. A member was required to pledge himself (1) to educate women under his control, (2) not to marry his daughters before they were 10 years of age, (3) not to marry his sons before they were 18 years of age, (4) to partake of light refreshments served by Brahmans at social gatherings, (5) to dine with remarried parties and foreign-travelled Hindus, (6) not to keep a concubine, (7) not to give nautch parties, and (8) not to attend such parties.[71] The Bandhu Samaj, Poona City, was started in Poona on the 13th April, 1907, by some earnest youngmen, resident in Somwar Peth of that city. The objects of the Samaj were thus set forth—(1) to promote union and brotherly feelings among men of all religions, castes and creeds without wounding the religious or social susceptibilities of any, (2) to discuss with an open mind, religious, social and moral questions with a view to removing existing evils, (3) to engage in active work for the reform of what by common consent had been recognised as abuses in society, (4) to promote education among the masses, (5) to elevate the depressed classes, (6) to organise night schools, public lectures, temperance work etc. to achieve objects 3, 4, 5.[71a]

There were also Jain Sabhas or Reform Associations at Ajmere, Jaypore, Kekri, Ulwar, Jhalawar and Perwa. The aims and objects of these associations were (1) religious reform and education, and (2) social reform and secular education. For the education of public opinion, a national monthly paper, called Jain Prabhakar, was started by Lala Chhoga Lal Ajmeri. A National Fund, named Jain Vidyalaya Bhandar, also came

70 Ibid, App p. 21

71. Report, 7th N S C., p. 45.

71a I.S R, Vol. XVIII, p 415.

into existence It was intended to help Jain students in their prosecution of religious studies principally and secular studies secondarily The ultimate aim was to establish a Jain College[72] The Bharatvarshiya Digambar Jain Mahasabha founded in 1893, maintained a number of newspapers—the Digambar Jain, the Hindi Jain Gazette the Jain Mitra and a Women s paper the Jain Nari Hitkari[73] The advanced groups among Jains became organised in 1894 as the Jain Youngmen s Association It later on came to be known as the Bharat Jain Mahamandal—one of its most prominent works being female education[74]

The Sikhs also did not escape the reforming spirit of the time All the evils of Hindu social life had crept back into the Sikh society—idols had found their way not only into the homes of the people but into the Sikh temples themselves caste had again come back About 1890 a body of reformers arose among them and summoned their leaders to action for the revival of Sikhism and the uplifting of the Community[75]

A Khalsa College was established at Amritsar A Central Association called the Chief Khalsa Diwan with its office at Amritsar came into existence and local associations called Singh Sabhas were formed all over the country for the strengthening and purification of Sikh Life They carried on agitation in favour of the extension of education and of social reform[76] Like the Hindu reformers the Sikhs also protested against caste and child marriage pleaded for the widow s right to remarry agitated against expensive weddings and advocated temperance They made a good deal of progress They had a Widows Home with thirty inmates at Amritsar They had also orphanages and they also made attempts to help the Depressed Classes[77]

In May 1908 the first Sikh Educational Conference was held at Gujranwala when it passed several resolutions advocating

72 Ibid pp 4 55 330
73 Farquhar J.N., op cit p
74 Ibid p 334
75 Ibid p 3 0
76 Ibid p 341
77 Ibid p 342

self-help and appealing to Government for greater facilities both as regards the education of its youth in schools and colleges and for their admission in public service. One resolution noted with regret that on the occasions of marriage, death and other social ceremonies, the Sikhs gave a great deal of charity, and humbly requested that a part of it be directed towards the educational improvement of the Panth and impressed upon the members to donate at least Rs 1-4-0 on each such occasion to the funds of the educational committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan.[78] This Conference continued to be held year after year at different places.

The agencies of social reform of all sorts, too numerous to be exhaustively described, continued to crop up all over the country. But it was not only organisations of social reform that came into existence in rapid succession specially after 1885, certain organs of social reform also came into existence. The most important of them all, the '*Indian Social Reformer*' came out in 1890, thanks to the enthusiasm of social reformers. The story is rather interesting. K. Subba Rao, who was on the Editorial Staff of the Hindu, Madras, was an ardent advocate of social reform One day in 1890 M. Veeraraghavachariar said to him that the Hindu was in difficulty due to his (Rao's) and G. Subramania Iyer's following a policy which openly and exclusively advocated social reform. If they (Rao and Iyer) could modify their policy, the concern might improve.[79] Upon this K Subba Rao, A Subba Rao and C.R. Chakravarthi Iyengar agreed among themselves that a separate weekly paper advocating social and moral reforms exclusively, should be started at once. At once the prospectus was drawn up and issued depending on public support. Certain people agreed to work on the staff without any remuneration. But there was no fund, large or small, to bear the upkeep. The promoters of the paper, however, were hopeful that if labourers were given free of cost, the public would undertake the cost of maintaining

78. I S.R., Vol XVIII, pp 421-'22

79 Subba Rao, K. op cit , p. 217.

the paper Mr K Natarajan a rising figure in Madras public life, at once joined [80] Natarajan, not only unsurpassed as an editor, but also as a practical social reformer who had sacrificed all that was valuable in the world at the high and sacred altar of his cherished convictions and preachings remained all among the editor of the Reformer After K Subba Rao's departure from Madras, Natarajan carried the *Reformer* to Bombay [81]

There were several other periodicals devoted exclusively to the education and social amelioration of women viz , *the Indian Ladies Magazine*, the Antahpur the Mahila Mitra etc The work of these agencies of social reform we shall review in the subsequent chapters.

80. Ibid. p 218
81 Ibid. p. 219

SEVEN

Education and Uplift of Women

Of all the items of social reform that of the education and emancipation of women engaged the attention of all schools of social reformers most. There might be differences between different schools of reformers regarding the scope and nature of female education and emancipation; but as to the desirability of the item itself, there was no difference of opinion. The rationalist reformers, the revivalists and the orthodox—all stood for female education of some sort or other Women suffered because of their ignorance, of their infant motherhood, infant widowhood and abject dependence upon men. Reformers might differ as to the merit of widow-marriage, but no body objected to the amelioration of the condition of Hindu widows.

Another point to be borne in mind is that this movement also was indigenous, and was not due to the prevalance of Christian ethics as some writers[1] would have us believe. Sm. Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, one of the leading feminists in India, is of opinion that the history of the women's movement in India must be traced from its very source in order to get the right psychological background, for modern India is but the shadow of her past and in order to gauge the significance of that shadow one must know the light which cast it.[2] She further emphasises that the women's movement in India is very

1 Cf Farquhar, J N op cit, and O'Malley (Ed) *Modern India and the West.*

2. Chattopadhyaya, Sm. K., in *Women in Modern India*, p. 1

much different from its counter part in Europe Unlike in Europe man did not question in India the women s right to enter any field of activity or any profession though he had held complete sway everywhere for many years then keeping women out and restricting their influence and scope of work by rigid rules and customs But when the day came for woman to emerge from seclusion imposed on her and take her rightful place along with man it did not strike him as being anything new or strange So the feminist movement in India could not in any sense be said to be a rebellion or a revolt against man it was rather an attempt to regain lost ground It was neither actuated by any spirit of competition nor marked with violence, it was on the other hand a movement of calm assertion [3] The new awakening among women had its roots in the nineteenth century and the All India Women s Conference had been in vogue practically ever since the birth of the National Congress but not on a large organised scale [4]

There were however differences as to the sort of education to be imparted to women Addressing the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association (November 1896) Chandavarkar ridiculed the idea of discussing whether education should be imparted to women in the vernaculars or in English It was sufficient to say that no man or woman should be ignorant of his or her vernacular Girls must be given such education as would make them fit for being the guardian angels of their homes and would enable them to be not only good house wives but also good companions of life Besides other things girls must be taught the biographies of great women whether of India or of foreign countries the art of domestic economy and house keeping Without going into discussions he would assert that women should know their own vernacular that they should know all that could be learnt about house keeping and sewing and the essential truths and holier and higher and more ancient traditions of the Hindu religion and society and not merely the

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3 Ibid pp 4-5
4 Ibid p 5

female Math in which religious scriptures literature Sanskrit grammar and even some amount of English would be taught Other matters such as sewing culinary art rules of domestic work and upbringing of children would also be taught while Japa worship and meditation etc should form an indispensable part of the teaching Those living there permanently renouncing home and family ties would be provided with food and clothing from the Math others would be allowed to study in the Math as day scholars With the permission of the head of the Math the latter might even be allowed to stay in the Math occasionally The elder Brahmacharinis would take charge of the training of the girl students in Brahmacharya After five or six years training in that Math the guardians of the girls might give them away in marriage But if deemed fit for yoga and religious life with the permission of their guardians they would be allowed to stay in that Math taking the vow of celibacy These celibate nuns would be in time the teachers and preachers of the Math In villages and towns they would open centres and strive for the spread of female education [10]

Even after marriage and entering the world so the Swami hoped, the girls educated as outlined above would inspire their husbands with noble ideals and be the mothers of heroic sons But the rule that the guardians of the girls in the female Math must not even think of marrying them before they attain the age of fifteen must be strictly adhered to [11]

Vivekananda had great faith in the regenerating power of womanhood He believed that if even one among the women became knower of Brahma then by the radiance of her personality thousands of women would be inspired and awakened to truth and great well being of the country and society would ensue [12] He advised his countrymen to open girls schools in every village and to try to uplift women For, if women were raised their children by their noble actions would glorify the

10 Swami Vivekananda Vol VII p 215
11 Ibid p 216
12 Ibid p 217

name of the country. Then and then alone would culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.[13] But female education was to be spread with religion as its centre, and all other training was to be secondary to religion. Due attention must be paid to religious training, the formation of character, and observance of the vow of chastity.[14]

Mrs. Besant similarly believed that the regeneration of India was possible only through the proper education of her women. Until girls also were educated; until they were taught and trained, until they knew the glory of the past, and taught the children on their knees what India was and what she might be; until Indian mothers were also worthy of the Indian women of the past, until they became patriots as well as the men and loved the land as well as their husbands, until the curse of early marriage was removed which made the girl a child-wife and a mother while she should be playing with her dolls and learning in the school, until that ancient institution of Brahmacharya, which forbade students to enter into the married life until the student life was over, was restored—until these things were done in India, India must remain weak.[15]

Both the Swami and Mrs. Besant lay stress upon proper female education with the object of making the nation strong It has been aptly remarked by O' Malley that feminism and nationalism had gone hand in hand.[16]

It is not that Vivekananda and Annie Besant held ideas which were not common; rather their ideas were generally held by many people. It appeared, for example, in the columns of the *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, "We do not want our women to become literary luminaries and scientific prodigies, so as to enable them to question the superiority of man, and claim equal rights with him, as the enlightened ladies do in England, by what is known as the 'Women Suffragist Movement' It is

13 Ibid , p 218.

14. Ibid , p 218

15 From a Lecture first published in 1904 Besant, Annie, *The Birth of New India*, pp. 390-391

16. O'Malley (Ed), *Modern India and the West* , p 695.

enough if besides being loving and sweet spoken as they are they become helpful companions to their husbands in passing through life s wilderness We have men enough and to spare for sterner works of toil and thought, and therefore we do not need that our finer sex should have to trouble their heads with complex problems for which they are naturally unfit ' [17] Again it was asserted that college and school education was not neces sary for girls that the fair sex had to perform duties principally far apart from those of the sterner sex that her upbringing must differ and literature mathematics science and philosophy might easily be dispensed with in her scheme of education that she must be given what might be called primary education and must know cooking training and nursing that inasmuch as she who rocks the cradle rules the world they must know how to make the home happy [18]

Miss Francesca Arundale Hony Principal Central Hindu Girls School Benares cautioned against hasty action in the field of female education She was apprehensive that any sudden and radical movements for the emancipation of Indian women would be followed by the most disastrous consequences There were instances when the sudden removal of the restrictions laid upon women had resulted in a hybrid development which could only be said to have the demerits of both East and West Such education was desirable for Indian girls as would help avoid on the one hand the fast unsexed women of the early movement in the West and on the other the foolish chatter of an ignorant mind The advocates of reform must remember that the first step towards freedom must be taken slowly and with precaution The Indian girl first of all must be taught to feel her responsibility to herself her family and her country The superstructure of instruction was to be raised on the foun dation of religion The impress of the sacred books must be on her heart and the words of the sacred song on her tongue Her education must make her fit to be a good daughter a good

17 I L M Vol VIII p 150
18 Ibid p 160

wife and a good mother.[19] Wisdom lay in following the middle path between the two opposing parties of those who saw in every new method a menace to religion and order and those who would throw away the whole of the past because it clashed with new ideas. The cry of the latter was—'break up the Pardah,' 're-marry the widows,' and 'bring the West into the East' and 'let the girl take her place beside the boy in the competition for place and position.' The two extremes ought to be avoided. Such an education should be given to woman as would strengthen and not weaken her womanly qualities and virtues and at the same time enable her to keep pace with the development which was passing over the male portion of the community.[20]

But there were other enthusiasts who were prone to criticising this tendency as reactionary and would advocate female education on Western lines. In spite of these conflicting views, female education was being patronised by the different schools of reformers in their own ways. Ever since its inception, the National Social Conference was stressing the need and importance of female education year after year.

Individual institutions in different parts of the country were also carrying on the work of female education. For example, the Sylhet Union (with which B C. Pal was intimately associated) founded in 1876, was doing some practical work in Assam, and had since 1881 been diligently exerting itself for the promotion of female education in particular. It held annual examinations of girls and Zenana ladies, and awarded prizes to successful candidates in the shape of fancy and useful articles and instructive books. The distribution of prizes was supplemented by the award of scholarships, to which the most deserving of the successful candidates were entitled. The Union had earned the sympathies of almost all the high officials of the Province and its figures showed that its progress was satisfactory.[21]

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19 Ibid., pp 219-220.
20 Ibid , p 221.
21. Report, 3rd N S C , p. 56.

Resolution IV at the 2nd National Social Conference (Allahabad 1888) among other things recommended to the local units that pledges were to be taken by members for educating all their female relatives to the best of their ability and in case of breach to pay a prescribed penalty[2] At the same conference supporting Resolution V K T Telang said that unless female education was widely spread even the raising of the age of marriage for girls among any large portions of the community was not possible and female education was hardly feasible until the age of marriage was raised So the solution was to push on female education as far as possible under the existing conditions and to simultaneously extend the limits of marriageable age[23] In 1889 (November) a Girls School was established at distant Quetta The moving spirit behind the institution was Zamiat Rai[24] Progress was painfully slow but all the same progress was there The Report from Poona in 1893 was that formerly girls were not allowed to continue their studies after their marriages but the number of married girls attending schools increased slowly Half time classes were opened for the education of grown up ladies They had been availed of by many ladies though burdened with the cares of the family[25] In 1894 Miss Manak Tarkhad became the first Hindu Lady Doctor in Bombay Presidency[26]

According to the Report of the Maharashtra Female Education Society for 1890 91 the Society had four institutions in Poona under its control—(1) The High School for Native Girls (2) The Female Training College (3) The Practising School attached to the Training College (5) The Primary School attached to the High School There were 227 pupils in the four institutions who were all females of these 39 married 173 unmarried and 15 were widows Of the 227 pupils 175 were

22 Ibid p 57
23 Ibid p 60
24 Report 4th N.S C App p 14
25 Report 7th N.S C. p 49
26 Report 8th N.S C pp 72-73

residents in Poona and 52 had come from other stations.[27]

In Bengal, besides the Sylhet Union, there were other bodies also promoting the cause of female education. In 1895 proposals were made to revive the old Victoria College for imparting higher female education. The aim was not to make women graduates, but to teach them to be good mothers and faithful wives—cooking, drawing, music and domestic economy formed part of the curriculum.[28] The Hitaishini Sabha, founded in 1877 chiefly for the spread of female education, and reorganised in 1890, was doing useful work. The subjects for examination were—Bengali Literature, Mathematics, History, Geography, Elementary Science, Sewing, Painting and Cooking.[29]

At the 10th National Social Conference, 1896, the very first resolution was on female education, "That in the opinion of the Conference, the permanent progress of our society is not possible without a further spread of female education, and that the best way is (1) to proceed on national lines by employing in female schools female teachers of good character and descended from respectable Hindu families, (2) to establish training schools to secure a sufficient number of qualified female teachers, (3) to open home classes for grown-up ladies, who cannot attend regular schools, with extra female teachers to visit and help, at stated intervals such ladies as read at their homes, (4) to employ a Pandita versed in Sanskrit to read passages from the Puranas, and impart religious and moral instructions to ladies, (5) to take steps to publish text books, suited to the requirements of female schools, and (6) to impart instruction in needle work, hygiene, culinary art, domestic economy, and training of children in secondary schools."[30]

Ladies themselves were working out their own salvation. Sm. Ramabai Ranade, worthy wife of a worthy husband, was the soul of the Hindu Ladies Social Club at Bombay. During

27. I S, Vol XI, p 1030
28. Report, 9th N S C, App p 48
29. Ibid, App. pp. 48-49.
30. Report, 10th N.S C., p 11.

1896 lectures were delivered and essays read by the members of the Club Instruction was also given in sewing and knitting No less than forty one essays were read during the year A 'Home Class for the instruction of young Hindu ladies in English through the medium of Marathi was started There were *also proposals to establish similar classes for teaching* English through Gujrati Pure Gujrati and Marathi classes were also formed for elderly ladies [31]

At Poona the Home Classes were organised on a regular basis by the 'Deccan Female Home Education Society These classes had been organised at Poona about a decade earlier under the Poona Branch of the National Indian Association The Poona branch agreed to make arrangements for the exami nations of the ladies studying in these classes and other ladies studying at their homes and not attending schools It gave some pecuniary assistance but did not undertake the manage ment of the classes which work was left to gentlemen and ladies taking interest in female education Miss Manning also gave help on behalf of the parent association But there was no regular work and to ensure this the Society was formed Its aim was to strengthen the existing classes and establish more classes if necessary [32]

The Aikya Wardhaka Stri Samooha Bombay was a *branch of the Hindu Ladies Social Club and was started on* the 14th December 1895 Mrs Sonabai Jayakar * the daughter of V J Kirtikar was responsible for its starting and its success ful management [33]

These attempts mostly unofficial though there were certain official attempts also encouraged Ranade to proclaim at the National Social Conference, Amraoti 1897, that the Bethune College of Calcutta the Girls High School at Poona and Ahmedabad the Kanya Mahavidyalaya at Jullundar the Singh Sabha s Girls School at Lahore the Maharani s Girls

31 Ibid App p 64
32 *Ibid App pp 70-71*
33 Report 11th N S C App p 43
* Mrs Sonabai Jayakar was the mother of Dr M R Jayakar

School at Mysore, the Mahakali Pathshala organised by Mataji Tapaswini Bai, a Maratha lady, in Calcutta, the Sylhet and Mymensing Unions, and all reform associations did their best to raise the standard and popularise the system of Female Education Many Associations, Sabhas and Samajas maintained independent girls' schools of their own. Ranade was conscious of the fact that conditions of female education were very backward, but he was satisfied that the country as a whole had awakened to the importance of developing the moral and intellectual capacities and aptitudes of women.[34]

Ranade's own province showed some hopeful signs According to the Report of the Maharashtra Female Education Society, 1898, in all 280 pupils were studying in the institutions under the society, of whom not less than 138 were Brahmans, and Hindu girls of other castes came to about one-third. As to status, eighty-six were married and had their husbands living, and forty-five were widows, most of whom were of the Brahman caste, and a large majority of them were seeking admission into the Female Training College. The heartening sign was that a large percentage of girls sent for instruction were over fifteen years of age[35]

Gujrat was also registering progress in the field of female education. Mrs. Sharda Sumant Batukram passed the Intermediate Examination of the Bombay University in 1898, and Mrs. Vasant Kumari N. Medh went up for the Matriculation Examination Both the young ladies belonged to Prarthana Samajist families.[36] The Gujrat Vernacular Society played a vital role in the education and enlightenment of ladies. Under its auspices debates on various topics were held in which women participated and competed. For example in 1894 the subjects of lecture were (1) Necessity of female education, (2) Of what sort should it be. In 1895 the subjects of lecture were—(1) How to teach children (2) How to preserve health in various

34 Ranade, M.G., *Essays*, p, 159
35 I S, Vol. XVIII, p. 916
36. Report, 13th N S.C, App p 62

states of women (3) How to spend leisure hours (4) How to tend the sick (5) The effect on families having educated and non educated women in the house (6) The effects of infant marriage (7) Necessity of higher education to women (8) The evil physical results of the siapa system during mourning (9) How ladies can be useful in famine times to the famine stricken etc [37] The subjects of prize lectures given by women in 1898 were—(1) The result of early marriag (2) The necessity of higher education for women The subjects for the year 1899 were—(1) The evil effect of customs of weeping and beating the breast on occasions of death (2) The ways in which women can be useful in the nursing feeding and clothing of distressed people in times of famine and other calamities The Ladies Club met regularly in the Bholanath Sarabhai Literary Institute of Women [38]

A novel experiment in education was the Mahakali Pathshala Calcutta Founded by Her Holiness Mataji a Maratha Lady its object was to regenerate Hindu society by educating Hindu girls in Hindu ways and upon strictly orthodox Hindu principles This object would be achieved further by infusing into them the ancient and sacred love of their country and by modelling their lives after the ideal Hindu female characters of old [39] Basic principles of the Mahakali system were—(1) The strict observance of the Shastric injunctions in matters of domestic life (2) The inculcation of Patibrata Dharma as exemplified in the lives of Savitri Sita Anusuya etc (3) The observance of the multifarious rules of the domestic life of a Hindu that is the performance of the duties as a daughter a sister, a wife a mother and lastly a relative and neighbour (4) The culture of the intellect by infusing into the minds of the girls a knowledge of their own literature and history such as is maintained in the Kavyas and Puranas (5) The teaching of economic duties such as sewing cooking keeping accounts etc [40] The fame of this Pathshala also

37 Report 15th N S C App p 95
38 Report 13th N S C App p 62
39 Report 21st N S C p 110
40 Report 21st N S C p 111

attracted the attention of Swami Vivekananda who paid a visit to it and applauded the efforts of Tapaswini Mataji in the cause of female education.[41]

The Native States were, sometimes, ahead of British India in the sphere of female education. Baroda was very fortunate in this respect. When, for example, the Maharani of Baroda distributed prizes for girl students in 1900, there were about 1600 girls present. The meeting was conducted entirely by ladies The report of Mr. Sorabjee, the Superintendent of Girls' Education in Baroda, showed the progress of female education in that State —

Year	*Girls Schools*	*Pupils*
1875	2	22
1880	8	502
1885	18	1,408
1890	35	3,415
1895	89	7,544
1900	108	9,151

Besides these, 5,880 attended boys' schools, of whom 39 pupils belonged to the *Antyaja* or Panchama Class.[42]

There were also Zenana classes teaching 368 pupils and Urdu Schools with 48 girls. In 1900 the Female Training College was attended by 80 pupils, and the Institution had furnished by that time about 75 mistresses for the State's girls' schools Because of *purdah*, Muslim ladies lagged behind in education, but the efforts of Miss Linbai Franjee assisted by Abhas Tyabji and Mrs. Tyabji bore fruit. A school for Mohammedan girls was opened in Baroda and there were 5 Urdu Schools for Muslim girls with 484 pupils

Zenana classes, started since 1886, catered to the need of married women in their leisure hours. There were eight of these classes with an aggregate of 205 women pupils. To encourage girls for higher education, the Maharaja instituted scholarships

41. Swami Vivekananda, *Works*, VI, p 445.
42. I S R , Vol X p. 154

which proved effective Two scholarships were awarded to girls from Baroda reading English in the Poona Native Girls High English School In the education of girls special attention was paid to the teaching of embroidery needle work drawing vocal music hygiene theoretical and practical cookery Sanskrit and native games [43]

The National Social Conference (1899) also laid stress on female education on these lines and resolved that no permanent progress of society was possible without progress of female *education and so recommended the following measures to be* taken —(*a*) to employ female teachers of good character and respectable families (*b*) to train these teachers themselves in special schools (*c*) where on account of popular prejudice public classes could not be opened to train these teachers to form home classes (*d*) to impart religious and moral instruction as also the knowledge of hygiene culinary art domestic economy and the training of children (*e*) to hold examinations on the plan followed in Bengal by the Sylhet and other Unions Therefore the Conference recommended *to the Social Reform Associations* in all places where public schools for girls could not be opened *to secure a body of self devoted sisters specially from* among the widows and to train them for the work of teachers [44]

The year 1899 registered progress with regard to female education in other ways also Two Bengali lady graduates were appointed examiners in the Calcutta University Both of them had received their education in the Bethune College But female education in the muffusil in Bengal was still in a back ward *condition A hopeful sign was the Kanya Mahavidyalaya* at Jallundur carried on by the local Arya Samaj where both religious and secular instruction was given The efforts made by the Ladies Associations at Bombay Akola Amraoti Ahmedabad and Madras were also full of promise [45] There were also two medical classes conducted at Nagpore and Amraoti

43 Ibid p 154
44 Ibid p 154
45 I S R. X p 157

The efforts made at Sholapur and Cuddalore to conduct girls' schools by way of Home classes for private instruction was also important. The regular schools at Poona, Ahmedabad and the Maharani School in Mysore continued their good work as before[46]

In 1900 Rukminiamma of the Maharani's Girls' School at Mysore passed the F A Examination of Madras University and three Tiya ladies also passed the outer gate of the Matriculation Examination[47]

This zeal for female education was not confined to any particular place or locality, but had caught the whole country. The same year, at the annual meeting of the Graduates' Association (North-Western Provinces), it was resolved that further efforts should be made in a more active and sustained manner by all graduates to promote female education. Syed Karamat Hussain suggested the following practical methods .—(1) Those who can spare time to teach should spend it in teaching their wives, daughters and other female relations (2) By means of addresses and articles in the newspapers, the public of those provinces should be made to realise the evils of neglecting female education. (3) Funds should be raised for establishing Normal Schools for the training of lady teachers. (4) Government should be requested to encourage at least elementary education among girls (5) The number of professional openings for educated girls in the community should be increased But the Association warned that no method which was calculated to violate the *purdah* system in any way was likely to succeed as a practical measure Mr. S Sinha, Bar-at-Law, seconded the scheme and it was passed unanimously[48]

For the education of girls, the education of women was the first condition Miss Mary Bhore very aptly remarked, "Everyone sees, however, that no real change can take place till women are educated . the women have great influence in Hindu

46. Ibid , p 173.

47. Ibid , p 184.

48 Ibid , p 266

family life they develop considerable character as they advance in age and experience are excellent disciplinarians often very practical business women they have done very well without reading and writing which they regard as masculine pursuits and any suggestion from the men of the family that the girls should be taught something of reading and writing is scouted as a silly fad if not positively scandalous [49]

Meanwhile girls, who had opportunity to receive higher education were winning fresh laurels In 1900 Miss Palit headed the list of successful B A candidates of the Calcutta University got the Eshan scholarship and joined the Presidency College for her M A She was also offered the State Scholarship of £ 200 for study in England but because she could not proceed to England that year she had to forgo her scholarship

The same progress was visible during 1901 One Hindu lady of Ahmedabad went up for B A Examination Another was preparing for it The Kanya Mahavidyalaya was also making rapid strides According to its Secretary Lala Badridas even after their marriage girls continued to attend the institution The interest taken by grown up ladies in education was an unmistakable proof of the popularity which the institution enjoyed in the local community Mothers and daughters mothers in law and daughters in law came together to receive education in the Vidyalaya [50] The Hyderabad Hindu Social Reform Association continued to bring out two monthly periodicals for the education of women and maintain 3 schools for girls started by the Association 7 years back The Lahore Brahmo Samaj maintained a good girls school The Saraswati Mandir of Sholapur had a small school for girls with an afternoon class for grown up ladies and in Ahmedabad and Madras the system of periodical lectures for ladies was kept up [51]

It was about this time that Miss A C Donnelly late

49 Ibid p 295
50 I S R Vol XI p 16?
51 Ibid. p 162

Superintendent Girls' Education, Trivandrum, read a paper in French, as Delegate of the National Indian Association to the "Congres Internationale Des Oeuvres et Institution Feminines" held in Paris [51a] According to her, in spite of colossal ignorance among women, there were a few young women who had become University graduates. Since 1858 more than 20 women had obtained the B A degree of the Calcutta University and many more of the Bombay University. These educated ladies were engaged in useful work; some were doctors in connection with the Lady Dufferin Fund, or with Missionary Societies; others had shown literary talents, several had married and helped to raise the standard of home life They formed a valuable class whose influence indirectly affected the large custom-governed portion of the community. The talented Bengali women writers were Mrs J. Ghosal, Mrs. R.N Rai, Sm. Girindra Mohini Dasi, Sm. Pramila Nag and Rani Mrisahini Mrs. Sathianadan was a novelist whose conspicuous works were 'Saguna', and 'Kamala'. Her works were considered masterpieces. In Maharashtra Pandita Ramabai rendered useful service to Marathi literature. Mrs. Kasibai Kanitkar wrote a life of Anandabai Joshi Miss Bhore wrote *Pushpak Randak*. Other writers were Mrs Samaskar Godavaribai, Pandita Kashibai, Parwatibai and Rukminibai. One lady writer conducted a journal called the *Arya Bhagini*. The Parsi ladies in the field of Gujrati literature were, Miss Patrick, who conducted the Stri-Mitra, and Mrs Putlibai K.N Kabraji, the delicate writer of interesting articles in the Indian Antiquary about old Gujrati literature and folk-lore.[52]

From July 1901, an *Indian Ladies' Magazine* was issued and edited by Mrs. Sathianadan.[53] It was a standard magazine for Indian ladies, and contained useful articles on their problems, surveying the progress made by them in all fields

The same year at the Calcutta University Examination one

51a I S.R Vol X, p 414

52 I S R, Vol XI, pp 4-5.

53 I S R, Vol XI, p 315

Brahmo girl, Santa Sarkar, passed the B A Examination three passed the F A and ten the Entrance Examination The National Social Conference (December 1901) again laid emphasis on the necessity of wider spread of female education in all standards for the advancement of social reform and suggested the desirability of the development of public institutions for that purpose side by side with such instructions as were provided at home then [54]

Higher education among women was making some progress In 1902 two Nagar Brahman ladies passed the B A Examination, one Mrs Ramanbai Nilkantha was made a fellow of the Gujrat College and the other Mrs Sumant Mehta opened a private home class for Hindu girls and grown up ladies where they would be taught free of charge [55] The same year among the successful candidates at the Matriculation Examination of Madras University was a Tiya girl of North Malabar In all Malabar there were only four girls who had by that time passed that Examination the other three had passed in 1899 and 1900 [56] That very year Miss Krishnabai Kelavkar took L M S degree of the Bombay University and then proceeded to England for higher education The Arcot Mission was also doing good work by means of its college at Arcot Female Training School and Hindu girls schools scattered in various Taluk towns [57]

This very year Sarala Ghosal made an appeal to establish a school for Hindu girls in Calcutta where instruction might be given on national lines Bethune College was considered unsuited to the Hindu girls on account of its advanced Western ideas Hence there was need for a school where Hindu ideas might be taught The Committee, which was constituted to give effect to the scheme consisted of Mr Justice Saroda Charan Mitter President Dr Rash Behari Ghose and Babu N N Sen as Vice Presidents and His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur of Nattore

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54 I S R Vol XII p 158
55 Ibid p 194
56 Ibid p 237
57 Ibid p 273

as Secretary.[58]

It was in this spirit of imparting national education to our daughters, that Hindu Girls' School at Conjeevaram was established only two years after this. About that time there was alarming increase of denationalisation and demoralisation in the appearance of Hindu girls. Their blank faces devoid of religious marks, their quasi-European mode of dressing the hair, their habit of wearing a hybrid uniform introduced by the Missionaries and their addiction to anti-Hindu songs, due to the same source, roused people to action.[59] To stem this tide of denationalisation Dewan Bhadur Somasundara Sastri and M.K. Ramanatha Sarma started the Hindu Girls' School at Conjeevaram, teaching Hindu girls from 5 to 13. The subjects taught were—Tamil and Telugu literature, general Geography, History of India, Civics, Arithmetic, Hygiene, Sanitation, House-Management, Music and Drawing.[60] This school might be compared to the Jallundur Kanya Mahavidyalaya, maintained by the Arya Samajists.

The main problem was, however, the education of married girls, and the social conferences all over the country were conscious of this fact. Thus the Provincial Social Reform Conference, Madras Presidency, held at Cocanada on the 14th of June, 1902, resolved, "Believing as it does that no sound reform can really advance so long as Hindu women are not well educated, and considering the fact that girls are not allowed to attend schools after a certain age, this conference requests Government to appoint lady teachers to undertake home classes in places where there is a sufficiently large number of ladies forthcoming to receive such education."[61] The same year Bombay Provincial Social Conference at Sholapur emphasized female education as the most important means of bringing about wholesome changes in social customs and advocated education of women to as high

58 Ibid., p. 297.
59 I.L.M., Vol XII, p. 242.
60 Ibid., p. 243.
61 I.S.R., Vol XII, p. 325.

a standard as possible [62]

Unfortunately on account of the plague and famine in several parts of the country the education of girls had received a certain set back and so the National Social Conference (Ahmedabad 1902) urged on Government and the public the importance of redoubling their efforts in that direction by the adoption of more extensive measures in the shape of public schools of home classes and organisation of public lectures and associations for the purpose of promoting the cause of Indian womanhood [63] The Bombay Provincial Conference Dharwar 1903 again emphasized the necessity of making strenuous efforts to still further extend female education and raise its standard as the most powerful lever in bringing about social regeneration [64]

Though even by 1903 Normal Colleges were few in India training of female teachers was being increasingly insisted on The appointment of the Inspectresses in the Bombay Presidency was in regard to girls schools to prove very valuable as they would superintend Normal classes and would otherwise promote training Khan Bahadur D R Chichgar had formed clas es for teachers in the Shapoorjee Bengalee School which he had done so much to improve Training had also been started in Miss Edge s C M S School and in a Bombay Convent In the Madras Presidency the Training School for Mistresses had existed for thirty years and it had ent out hundreds of teachers In Bengal also the Director had quite recently arranged for Normal Classes at the Brahmo Girls S hool at Calcutta There was another difficulty connected with the training of women teachers in India—non availability of students who could take advantage of colleges and classes But the young widows could be expected to take advantage of the facilities offered Here also there were certain difficulties —(*a*) a young widow could not live alone either as a teacher or as a student and (*b*) many a time she had lost the power of application to study through the

62 I S R Vol XIII p 79
63 Ibid p 169
64 Ibid p 350

troubles that had marked her life. Therefore it was necessary to make careful selection and provide some kind of guardianship. This plan had already been tried in Mysore with success, where a Home in connection with the Maharani's Girls' School, Mysore, was opened several years before 1903 for Brahmin widows willing to become teachers. In consequence, not less than 21 of such widows were employed in the schools of the State, and many more were receiving instruction Some had been appointed as teachers in the Maharani's Girls' School, others as headmistresses elsewhere. Besides, a large number of girl widows were receiving scholarships for training, and in view of the extreme orthodoxy of the people of Mysore, the progress made was surprising. Similarly in Madras a new scheme was put forward by Miss Car, Senior Inspectress, for preparing Hindu and Mohammedan widows to become teachers in that Presidency.[65]

The National Social Conference, (Madras, 1903) again repeated the resolutions of 1902 with regard to female education.[66] In 1904, a movement of much promise was taking place at Hyderabad (Dn.) Some Mohammedan ladies formed a Ladies' Association, which was to hold monthly meetings and an annual conference for the encouragement of social intercourse and for promoting education [67]

How conscious women had become of their duties and responsibilities, and their place in society can be inferred from the meeting of the Bharat Mahila Parishad, held on the 30th December, 1905, in the Nagari Pracharini Sabha Hall, Benares.[68] The following papers were read by ladies on the subjects noted against their names.[69]*

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65. The Indian Magazine and Review, reproduced in I.S R, XIII, pp. 409-410
66. I S R , XIV , p. 231
67. Ibid , p. 525
68. I.S.R , Vol XVI, p 218
69 Ibid , p 219

* The Bharat Mahila Parishad had been instituted in 1904 in order to awaken women to a sense of their duties I.S R , Vol XVII, p 377

ment service were to be encouraged to teach and train their wives to carry on the noble work The controlling agency was to consist of a trained European Chief Inspectress assisted by several assistant inspectresses But the crux of the problem was the enlistment of popular co operation and for this local committees of Indian ladies and gentlemen were to be formed [74a] *The Indian Social Reformer* was of opinion that Government efforts must be supplemented by popular efforts There were at that time two centres of girls education in Upper India—one at Jallundur in the Punjab and the other at Dehradun A third was being managed at Benares by Miss Arundale [75] These institutions were imparting instruction to girls on national lines

Meanwhile women organisations were carrying on the work of female education in different parts of the country The Gujrati Stri Mandal* founded in 1903 by Jamnabai Sakkai conducted free educational classes for married women and others The classes included girls of twelve and fifteen and occasionally women of sixty five Nursery class was also attached so that married ladies could bring their children with them The Mandal also served a social purpose as a women s club The members generally met for lectures Garba parties concerts and exhibitions of hand work [76]

Ladies gatherings were becoming more cosmopolitan in character and composition At the Mahila Parishad or Ladies Congress held at Madras on 30 12 1908 essays were read on Work in Srinivas Mandiram, Marriage Expenses Foreign Travel Education of Girls, Women and Education The Need for Girls School Stri Dharma The Raising of the Marriage able Age of Girls The Necessity in Madras for a Hindu Girls High School 'Industrial Education Our Indian Sisters and Hindu Ethics Education of Children' Education 'Home

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74a. *I S R. Vol XVIII p 577 578*

75 Ibid p 578

* I S R gives the name Gujrat Hindu Stri Mandal (I S R Vol XIX p 42)

76 *Women in Modern India* p 47

Education', 'Women's Duties to Society', 'Is English Necessary for our Girls'. 'Education of Women,' 'The place of Tamil in the Education of Girls', 'Charity'. The essays read were in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Marathi and English [77]

In 1909, Mrs. Ranade, Mrs Paranjpye, Mrs. Bambhai Bhat and others[78] were trying for the advancement of women. They conducted four different classes on the following lines : (1) Ladies who were unable to read Marathi well were taught only Marathi with all the branches of the study of a language together with a smattering of mathematics (2) Ladies who were advanced enough to begin the study of English alphabet were given elementary lessons in English together with their studies of advanced Marathi and arithmetic (3) Ladies who had done some English study at home but needed revision were taught English for one hour, the other hour being given to the systematic study of Marathi, reading, dictation, poetry, grammar, recitation, etc.

The second part of the education consisted of religious instruction, sewing and lectures which were more or less lessons

Mrs. Ranade had dedicated herself to the service of her more unfortunate sisters As far back as 1904 at the Conference of the Bharat Mahila Parishad, she had declared that the social service as conceived by her was to be carried on by those whose motto was 'Life is a sacred trust.'[79]

And acting under this inspiration, she started, like Malabari, the Seva Sadan The principal objects of the Seva Sadan were[80]— (*a*) To teach and educate women by means of regular classes and to impart instruction of a religious, literary, scientific, medical, and industrial character, to teach them the principles of First Aid, Hygiene, Sanitation, and Domestic Economy; (*b*) to widen the range of women's knowledge by means of libraries, lectures, publications, books, magazines, etc and by tours, excursions, and

77 I.S R, Vol XIX, p 205

78. Ibid, p 330

79 *Women in Modern India*, p 31.

80 Ibid, p 32

other popular methods (c) to enable women to participate intelli gently in all domestic social and national responsibilities and to inculcate in their minds the principles of self reliance and mutual helpfulness (d) to train women to render in a patriotic spiri educational medical and philanthropic service to the mothert land, and to their brothers and sisters in specially backward areas (e) to help in the promotion of national work in all these and similar ways for the social material and educational uplift of Indian women (f) to promote greater fellowship among the women of India (g) to start institutions for the promotion of these objects and ideas and to affiliate those that were working for them (h) to adopt such measures as would be conducive to the furtherance of these objects (i) to work directly to promote the all round well being of Indian womanhood

The Hindu Ladies Social Club continued to widen the horizon of social intercourse of Hindu ladies Thus we have it from the *Indian Ladies Maga ine* that the 16th Annual General meeting of the Hindu Ladies Social Club was held on the 16th January 1910 Mrs Ali Akbar presided It was a huge gather ing of ladies European Mohammedan Hindu and Parsee [81]

It was being inculcated through the Press and the platform that women were the real builders of the Nation and if the condition of women did not improve the Nation would decay

in the case of national decay and national dissolution women exercise a potent and pernicious influence Thus we see that in the case of Nations their responsibilities are doubled to that of the individuals and the rise and fall of a nation greatly depends on them

The position of women in a country is very serious They are the real hands that build and destroy Nations They are answerable for the prestige power and character of Nations

Let them try to build up an Indian Nation failing not to keep up their characteristic features of chastity love valour bravery prudence generosity and above all the self sacrificing spirit Let them be domestic help mates and spiritual guides of

81 I L.M Vol IX. p 749

their husbands. Let them be conscious of the fact that treachery, licentious morality, love of show, and pride were unknown to and unheard of among the women of India in her golden past, and thus show to the world that they are worthy successors of their noble, immortal, Indian mothers."[82]

Indian women were gradually being drawn in public life more and more. In December, 1911, Her Majesty, the Queen Empress held a reception at Delhi of the distinguished ladies then present at that city.[83]

By and by, popular opposition to the education of girls was wearing off, so much so that Mrs. Raman Pillai could remark in April, 1912, "With very few exceptions the orthodox party and the reformers are agreed that for the progress of the country the women of India should be educated. What, however, the majority of them want or can afford is, elementary education. A sound education, elementary, secondary, or technical, will equip them for the duties of their position, which will make them better wives, better mothers, better sisters and certainly infinitely more useful members of the society."[84]

But the ladies themselves were now trying to move forward and discussing the problems affecting them and the Nation. This was true not only of any particular part of the country, but of the country as a whole. The Bharati Samajam, Vizagapatam, for example, held its seventh anniversary in July, 1912. A number of Hindu ladies from different parts of the Telugu Country and some European, Eurasian and Indian Christian ladies of the town were guests. The spirit of reform would be evident from the topics they discussed—(*a*) women's education, (*b*) higher education, (*c*) liberty of women, (*d*) dancing girls, (*e*) bringing up children, (*f*) pure literature, (*g*) marriages, (*h*) bride and bridegroom purchase money, (*i*) social reform, (*j*) Ladies' Association and others.[85]

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82 I.L.M., Vol XI, pp 152-153.

83. Ibid., p 240

84 Ibid., p. 241-242

85. I.L.M. Vol XII, p 15

That ladies were in no way inferior to men was being evident everyday from the brilliant successes scored by women whenever they got an opportunity In 1912 Miss C N Muthulakshmi Ammal a native of Pudukottah was the first Indian lady to pass the M B C M Examination of the Madras University [86] Likewise Miss Regina Guha passed her B A in 1911 and was placed in First Class being the third in the Bengali list she passed her M A in 1913 and secured First Class First and took her law degree in 1915 She applied to the Calcutta High Court for enrolment as a pleader but her application was rejected on the ground that law did not permit the admission of a lady to a lawyer s profession [87]

It is strange that when popular enthusiasm was growing for the uplift of women Government machinery should have been so slow The National Social Conference held at Bankipore in 1912 again stressed in a resolution moved by Miss Ewing and seconded by Miss Williams that in the interest of the health and education of women *Purdah* should be abolished and vigorous efforts should be made to push on education among all classes of women in the country [88] The Conference further expressed satisfaction at the work of institutions like the Seva Sadan Society working in Bombay Poona and Ahmedabad the Widows Home and the Mahilavidyalaya Poona the Vanita shramas at Surat and Ahmedabad the Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Jullundur the Vanita Samaj of Amraoti and the Mahila Samaj of Yeotmal and recommended the establishment of similar institutions and home classes in advanced places [89] The All India Ladies' Conference was also held at Bankipore 29th December 1912 [90]

The Provincial Conferences were equally enthusiastic about female education The Bombay Provincial Social Conference

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86 Ibid p 10
87 I L M Vol XIV p 43
88 Report 26th N S C p 13
89 Ibid p 14
90 Ibid p 16

a monthly magazine (*d*) making grant to girls schools and colleges to the extent possible (*e*) preparing suitable curricula of studies in harmony with the Indian spirit and need (*f*) and affiliating girls schools and colleges to the Central Society for mutual protection and support [96]

The crowning success of the efforts of the promoters of female education on national lines was the Women s University at Poona the moving spirit b hind whi h was D K Karve In 1916 the Widows Home Poona and its two off shoots the Mahila Vidyalaya or Girls School and the Nishkama Karma Math or the D siterested Service Abbey w re amalgamated into the single institution the Mahila Pathshala or Wom n s College affiliated to the Indian Women s University The High School and the Primary School class together formed the Mahilashrama while the Mahila Pathshala taught the courses of the Hindu Women s University The University had only an humble beginning Only four students were preparing for the first year s examination of the Women s University after passing the Entranc Examination in June 1916 [97] The College was to be complete with all classes in June 1918 and in June 1919 the first batch of the graduates of the Women s University was scheduled to go out [98]

But this attempt on Prof Karve s part to popularise female education was dubbed as a reactionary tendency by the more zealous reformers The ire of the *Madras Social Reform Advocate* was roused when Principal Paranjpye opposed in the Bombay Legislative Council the starting of a Women s College in Bombay His plea was that there was no need for a special college for Indian women in which the curriculum was the sam as that for Indian men that the few women who wished to pursue University studies might well attend men s colleges and that it would be sheer waste of money to provide a separate college for Indian women According to the *Madras Social*

96 Ibid. p 247
97 Ibid p 375
98 Ib d p 376

Reform Advocate if at Madras there were comparatively few women who went up for college education, it was due to absence of facilities in the past and not to lack of desire If this was so in Madras, it must be much more so in Bombay where a larger number of girls attended schools and studied in the higher standards of the school course. A women's college was intended not only to answer an existing demand, but also to invite school-going girls to pursue their studies into the college classes Whatever might be the merits or demerits of co-education in the abstract, there was no denying that lady students in a men's college, at least in India and in the existing stage of the development of the Indian society, felt like a fish out of water That was the experience even of a European lady who had taken her B.A (Hons) Degree from the Presidency College, Madras, and who had described herself as a sort of exile during the three years of study she had to undergo in the college When she said so she only expressed the feeling of most lady fellow-students A students' hostel for women might remedy the defect only partially, for the sense of comrade-ship, a great intellectual stimulus, would still be wanting. Colleges with women students and women professors had superior advantages over the system of allowing girls to share in the instruction given in colleges intended chiefly for yougmen. The *Advocate* denounced Paranjpye's preference for education imparted in and through the vernaculars, if not altogether for vernacular education Paranjpye wished to see Professor Karve's scheme of education for Indian women succeed and would like to see it accepted as the chief, if not the only right, method of educating Indian women When that scheme was discussed, it was recommended for support in quite an apologetic manner, as the most practical, though not ideally the best, scheme After the Indian Women's University had materialised, the tone of the apologists changed, and they were learning to speak of higher education for women, as the less natural kind of education for women The *Social Reform Advocate* concluded, "If you place before a people who are just beginning to appreciate the bles-

sings of female education, two schemes one with a definite practical end, and the other definite and practical enough but aiming at the elevation of women as free beings capable of infinite development in the intellectual moral and spiritual scale the tendency will always be to prefer the former to the latter This is why the so called practical schemes of education have always to be examined carefully There is lurking in them the danger of arresting progress They may command success in the present but they carry no germs of infinite development in the future [99]

Besides the education of women the most pressing need of the hour was the wiping off of the tears of the Hindu widows Hindu widows were and are the most pathetic human beings on earth Devoid of all earthly happiness they were consigned to the most dismal and desolate life The most heart rending of all was the shaving and disfigurement of child widows The awakened soul of a proud Nation could never be unsympathetic to the wails of hapless widows All the Reform Associations all India or Provincial all the Samaj movements all the individual reformers did their best to ameliorate the condition of widows They might differ as to the propriety of widow remarriage, as to the ideal of Hindu widowhood and as to the methods to be adopted for bettering their lot but there was no difference of opinion as to the gravity of the problem and its solution

Swami Vivekananda ridiculed the idea of widow remarriage, but he wanted them to lead a more fruitful life Annie Besant held the Hindu ideal of marriage in the highest esteem and had a very high regard for Hindu widows but she thought that the lot of widows might be changed by making them the willing helpers of their sex by training them as teachers and as nurses thus making widowhood a consecration to the service of humanity They might emulate their sisters of the West thousands of whom willingly embraced celibate life to devote

99 From *The Social Reform Advocate* Madras reproduced in I.L.M Vol XVI p 27

themselves to prayer and meditation, to serve as nurses of the sick poor, educators of the young, and as guardians of helpless orphans and the friendless aged.[100] Even B M. Malabari was not opposed to this idea He conceded that Hindu widows might be ideal and innocent, and that thousands of them might have consecrated themselves to charity and service; but millions of them might be living lives which were a curse to themselves and a menace to society.[101] So he wanted the Government to rule that (1) no minor Hindu girl, losing her husband, should be unwillingly forced to life-long widowhood, (2) in suspected cases it should be found out whether the widow had accepted perpetual seclusion, voluntarily or under compulsion, (3) every widow should have all facilities to complain to the authorities of ill-treatment meted out to her, and (4) the priests should have no right of excommunicating the relations and connections of the parties contracting the second marriage.[102]

The National Social Conference interested itself from the very beginning in the betterment of the lot of widows. By the 5th resolution at its second session at Allahabad (1888), it recommended the remarriage of child widows and the prevention of disfigurement of child widows prevailing in certain parts of India.[103] By the year 1890, there was agitation among the barbers of Bombay against the shaving of young Brahman widows. Articles denouncing the practice appeared in the *Dinbandhu*, an Anglo-Marathi journal in Bombay The barbers were advised to wash their hands of the sin of such an atrocious deed, and save themselves and the poor helpless girls and women of India from remorse, shame, and misery Encouraged by this appeal, the barbers held a meeting on 14th April, 1890, and it was unanimously agreed that the barbers should henceforward entirely give up the evil practice of shaving high caste Hindu widows. This resolution on the part of the barbers of Bombay evoked

100. Besant, Annie, *The Birth of New India*, p 302
101 Malabari, B M , *Infant Marriage* etc , p 3.
102 Ibid , p 5
103 Report, 3rd N S C , pp 58-59

universal approbation and even the ladies in England congratulated them on their praiseworthy determination[104]

At the 5th National Social Conference also Resolution IV of the Bombay session viz that disfigurement of child widows before the age of 18 and even after that age without their consent recorded in writing before a *Panch* and a Magistrate should be prohibited by law was reaffirmed[105]

Bengal was the worst victim of this social malady Out of 13 878 widows under four years of age in all India Bengal alone had 4 162 (about ⅓) widows between five and nine years of age were 64 000 of which 14 000 were in Bengal in all in the year 1895 there were 1 14 532 widows under 14 years and of this number 46 260 (nearly one half) were in Bengal besides there were 12 000 between 14 and 19 years of age[106]

If in Bengal widows were most numerous and they suffered most it was also from Bengal that the first call for the betterment of the condition of widows came It was not only Ram Mohan who agitated for saving the widows from the funeral pyre or Vidyasagar who was instrumental in getting a permissive Act for the remarriage of widows passed but it was also Sasipada Banerjea from Bengal who was the first to establish a Widows Home in 1887 with a view to removing the miseries of widows[107] By 1900 there were two Widows Homes besides Sasipada Banerjea s Widows Home The Hindu Widows Home had been established at Poona in 1896 It was making good progress In 1900 the Home gave education besides board and lodging to ten widows seven of whom were Brahmins Six widows formerly supported by the Home were earning their own livelihood as mistresses The third was Madras Home for Widows of Pandit K Viresalingam Pantulu[108] This Hindu Widows Home received young widows of good character belonging to castes where widow remarriage was prohibited and who were willing

104 Report 4th N S C App p 20
105 Report 5th N S C p 22
106 Report 9th N S C App p 48
107 I S R Vol X pp 164 165
108 I S R Vol XI p 162

to be educated in the Presidency Training Institution, Egmore' for at least three years. Board and education were free of charge. In the case of minors consent of parent or guardian was necessary [109]

The National Social Conference (1899) also drew the attention of all Associations to the improvement of the condition of child widows This could be done by promoting education among them and by teaching them to be self-dependent. Thus their life might be bettered, and their assistance secured in philanthropic and charitable works [109a]

The condition of the Hindu Widows' Home, Poona, continued to progress. The arrangements in every detail exhibited the thoughtful care of the founder The girls were happy and well looked after Prof. Karve himself taught them everyday for two hours English, Sanskrit and Marathi [110]

According to the report of the Hindu Widows' Home, Poona, 1901, it had gone far ahead since its inception. For the first two years of its life, the Association not having a Home of its own, had to educate a few poor widows at the Female School, and the Female Training College at Poona. Afterwards an independent Home for widows was maintained by the Association under the name of the Anathabalikashrama The Home was under the supervision of Professor Karve, who was assisted by a lady of experience. She was entrusted with the duties of a resident superintendent, who had to look after the general well-being of the inmates as well as to help them in household work.[111]

Owing to the old age of Mr. Banerjea, his Widows' Home was closed in 1901 [112] But the Widows' Home founded in Calcutta in July, 1902, took the place of Banerjea's Home. After the breaking up of his Widows' Home at Baranagore some poor helpless widows were compelled to live in certain families. But

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109 I S R, Vol X, p 191
109a I.S R, Vol. X, p 158
110 I S R, Vol XII, p. 233
111. Ibid, p 273.
112 I S.R., Vol. XI, p 266

as it was not found desirable for them to be there Pandit Sivnath Sastri B Hurinath Das and some other gentlemen called upon the Bharat Mahila Samiti to start another Home where the widows could find refuge with their children So the said Samiti started this Home with a view to giving them the protection of a home where they might have ample opportunities to lead a religious life to improve their minds and to pick up an independent and honest livelihood [113]

The pitiable condition of widows had moved even those people who had otherwise renounced the world Thus a message sent by Swami Ram Tirth to his countrymen which was circulated with the *Indu Prakash* was a burning plea for the abolition of evil social customs With reference to infant marriage and enforced widowhood the Swami said Is not the phenomenon of infant marriage and enforced widowhood most unnatural in the world ? Is any grain of humanity left in you ? How could you rest before you have put a check on these inhuman unnatural customs ? The tender arms of widowed children are unconsciously held out for succour living *satis* are burning by inches on the pile of your fiery customs right before your eyes looking to you for help [114]

The Kanya Maha Vidyalaya of Jullundur opened a Hindu Widows Home in March 1906 [115] The C P Social Conference 1907 also recommended the prevention of the disfigurement of widows, and of child widows in particular encouragement to opening of Widows Home for helpless widows and the discouragement of *Pardah* system [116]

The Mysore Widows Home was founded in February 1907 by Rai Bahadur Narasin Iyengar who laboured* life long

113 From the Indian Messenger of Calcutta reproduced in I S R Vol XIII p 384
114 I S R Vol XVI p 482
115 I S R Vol XVII p 183
116 Ibid p 428
* Narasin Iyengar was the father and the greatest patron of Female Education in Mysore The Mysore Maharani College owed a great deal to his paternal interest and the heavy personal pecuniary sacrifices he made

in the cause of female education[117]

Meanwhile the Widows' Home at Poona was registering more and more progress year after year, and by March, 1907, it had a side growth in the Mahila Vidyalaya. From the very beginning the Widows' Home allowed a small number of ladies other than widows to be admitted into the Home provided their guardians paid their boarding charges. The homely manner of life at the Widows' Home produced a desire in several people to get their married and unmarried girls educated at the Home, and the number of such girls in the Home kept steadily increasing along with that of the widows. The authorities of the Widows' Home then thought it desirable to limit the number of married and unmarried girls to one-fourth of the total number of inmates The number went on increasing, so an independent institution was necessary and on the 4th March, 1907, the Mahila Vidyalaya was opened in an old and rather inconvenient house, belonging to Deccan Education Society, Poona The Vidyalaya was to maintain boarding and lodging arrangements and the benefit of these was to be given to ladies wishing to attend the Fergusson College and the New English School The Vidyalaya then (August, 1906) contained 22 inmates in all, two attending the Fergusson College, 14 the New English School and six the Navin Marathi Shala[118]

In 1908 Miss Arundale, Honorary Principal of the Hindu Girls School, proposed to start a Hindu Widows' Home at Benares[119]

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during his somewhat long and eventful life. He gave from his own pay and pension, scholarships to deserving female students and widows, anxious to prosecute their studies or to get training as nurses and mid-wives He took a personal interest all his life in the progress and development of the Maharani's College He was always available for consultation and aid to forlorn women of all ages, young and old, and no member of the gentler sex that came to him with young fatherless children and with weeping eyes, ever went back empty-handed. (K Subba Rao—*Revived Memories*, pp 384-385).

117. I.S.R , Vol. XVIII, p 340.

118 Ibid , p 607.

119. I.S R., Vol XVIII, p. 620

The Dacca Hindu Widows Home was founded by Sarayu Bala Datta Editor Bharat Mahila Its object was to give general and vocational education to Hindu widows so as to afford them an opportunity to cultivate their minds and enable them to earn an independent and honourable living[120]

The stress was always on making widows happy and useful members of society The Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1916 strongly supported the movement to ameliorate the condition of widows so as to help them becom useful respected and self -specting members of society by such means as Widows' Homes and similar institutions such as the Seva Sadan Vanita Vishram and the Poona Widows Home for giving them shelter under difficulties general education and special training for social service as Sisters of Mercy or for other avocations in life[121]

Besides the education of women and the bettering of the condition of widows stress was also laid on the removal of the disabilities of Hindu women by legislation such as prohibiting women from possessing full dominion over property and imposing disabilities on them in matters of succession inheritance and testamentary disposition of property The removal of such existing provisions of law and practice as prohibited women from entering the legal profession and disqualified them for membership of Legislative Councils Municipal Corporations and similar public institutions was also demanded[121a]

The most heartening sign of the times was that women now were themselves coming forth to effect their progress and salvation For example, the Satara Abalonnati Sabha was started on the 9th June 1903 The principal ladies of the town both young and old met informally and settled the objects of the Sabha The audience was entertained with a speech by Miss Mathurabai Joshi on the life of Savitri All workers were women—Mrs Rakhmabai Pathak was President Mrs Saraswati

120 I S R Vol XXIV p 393
121 I S R Vol XXVII p 176
121a Ibid pp 1 6 127

bai Joshi and Mrs Satyabhamabai Kale were Vice-President and Secretary respectively.[122]

Similarly, the Mahila Seva Samaj, Bangalore, founded on the 1st of August, 1913, for the promotion of measures having for their object the benefit and advancement of Indian women, had a more ambitious programme It included the organisation of educational, medical and philanthropic work and the training of women to take part in such work. The following were the various activities —

1 Educational (i) General or Literary Education.
(ii) Special Instruction in (*a*) Home Industries, (*b*) Fine Arts, (*c*) Household Management
(iii) Religious and Moral Instruction
(iv) Lectures and discourses on general topics

2 Philanthropic—Grants of scholarships, relief of suffering and distress, visits to medical institution etc

3 Social —Games, recreations, and social gatherings etc [123]

Thus efforts were being made by different sorts of organisations in various parts of the country with diverse objects in view to educate women, to raise up the status of widows and to uplift the fairer sex. It is irrelevant to enquire if there was much quantitative difference in the status of women about 1920 from what it was before 1885 What is important to bear in mind is that with the growth of national consciousness there was also an awareness on the part of thinking people that justice must be done to the fairer sex and that without the progress of women no general progress of the country was possible.

If we compare the attitude of the Indian National Congress during the eighties of the last century with its attitude during the second decade of the twentieth century as regards the place and status of women, the difference and advancement in the status of women would be obvious. In 1889, there were many women

122 Report, 17th N S C, p 194

123 I S R, Vol. XXVII, p 224.

delegates to the Congress and they were allowed to appear on the platform but due to the opposition of a considerable section of more conservative delegates they were not allowed to speak and participate in the deliberations Naturally the ladies took offence on the silence imposed on them

So in 1890 only four lady delegates graced the occasion But that year a woman delegate was not only allowed to speak rather she proposed a vote of thanks to the President Thus was initiated without one single dissentient voice a reform which in its ultimate consequences will greatly facilitate the labours of our Social Reformers in their efforts to raise the status of our Indian women [124]

At the Delhi Congress 1918 Mrs Sarladevi Choudhurani moved a resolution on female franchise That this Congress urges that women possessing the same qualifications as are laid down for men in any part of the scheme shall not be disqualified on account of their sex [125]

Supporting the resolution Mrs Anasuya Sarabhai said in this our great movement for self Government women have given every assistance They have sent in monster petitions to the Secretary of State A deputation on their behalf also waited on him and in this very Congress you see that they are present in large numbers The rights you demand for yourself the liberty you are fighting to secure for the people of this land in order to obtain these very rights the same liberty the women of this country ask for your assistance and I trust you will give it and by so doing you will prove your sense of justice of our people and thereby add to the glory of the motherland [126]

Mrs Saraladevi Choudhurani General Secretary Bharat Stri Mahamandal also waited on Mr Montague and His Excellency the Viceroy on behalf of a ladies deputation from the Bharat Stri Mahamandal Punjab Branch on the following among other points In view of the enforced widowhood of Hindu

124 Report 6th I N C Introduction p XI
125 Report XXXIII I N C p 118
126. Ibid p 121

widows, many of whom were quite destitute and indigent, special institutions should be provided for widows endowed with scholarships for each inmate to make them self-supporting members of society and to help Government in the supply of female teachers Special provision should be made by legislation for protecting the interest of Hindu widows and daughters in matters of inheritance to the property of their husband or father The interests of Indian wives should be safeguarded by making it criminal and unlawful for an Indian married man to marry an English woman Indian women should be allowed to enter any profession they choose, legal or otherwise Indian women should be allowed to have the right of vote in Municipal and other elections. Indian women should be associated in all movements for the furtherance of female education The control of girl schools should be made over to Visiting Committee of Indian ladies A strong Indian female agency for inspection should be substituted for non-Indian Agency An Indian Ladies' Advisory Council should be formed for matters pertaining to female education [127]

During the period 1885-1920, there was all-round improvement in the condition of women. The same forces which had generated national consciousness also led to social reform. One of these forces was the progressive decision of the Civil Courts A Kunbi Client said to an eminent lawyer about the British rule, "Sir, it is a very good Government indeed—we live so much in peace and security But there is one evil to which it has led. Under former rulers one could govern one's wife, but now the moment you beat your wife, she runs up to Magistrate."[128] The cumulative effect of all the forces working together was that *pardah* began to be discarded more and more, people came to realise the importance of female education of one kind or another, women began to organise their own clubs and get themselves interested in public affairs, and last, but not the least, they also began to appreciate the significance of earning their own livelihood.

127 I S R., Vol XXVIII, p. 121.

128 Chandavarkar, N G. Speeches etc , Op 21

could be no race of patriots and of heroes. It was the great women of India who made her what she was in ancient days.[9]

Polygamy was another evil which was prevalent in its most virulent form in Bengal. From a list published by Vidyasagar it came to be known that there were 133 polygamists who had more than five wives each in less than a hundred villages in the Hughli District. One polygamist had 80 wives, another 72, a third one 62, a fourth one 56 and a fifth had 55. There were three polygamists with 50 wives each, one with 42, one with 41, 3 with 40 each, one with 36, three with 33 each, 7 with wives ranging between 21 and 28 in number, 6 with 20 each, one with 19, two with 17 each, two with 16 each, 13 with 15 each, 3 with 14 each, two with thirteen each, eleven with twelve each, three with 11 each, 14 with ten each, 2 with 9 each, 14 with 8 each, 8 with 7 each, 16 with 6 each and 21 with 5 each.[10] Vidyasagar did not count those having less than five wives each.

In an information on bigamy and polygamy from 47 villages, it was found that there were 618 bigamists and 570 polygamists. Of the polygamists 190 had 3 wives each, 96 had four wives each, 54 had five wives each, 35 had six wives each, 26 had seven wives each, 20 had eight wives each, 10 had nine wives each, 19 had ten wives each, 9 had eleven wives each, 12 had twelve wives each, 5 had thirteen wives each, 11 had fourteen wives each, 4 had fifteen wives each, 6 had sixteen each, 2 had seventeen each, one had nineteen wives, 3 had twenty wives each, one twenty one wives, 2 had twenty two wives each, one had 23 wives, 4 had 25 wives each, one had 26 wives, another had 27 wives, another had twenty eight, yet another had 29 wives, 4 had thirty wives each, two had 32 wives each, one had 34 wives, another had 35 wives, another had 36 wives, another had 50 wives, another had 52, another had 67 and yet another had 107 wives. Cases of special interest among the above were—a boy of 12 had two wives, a boy of 15 had four, 3 boys of 15 had two wives each, one boy of 16 had 3 wives, one of 16 had seven

9 Ibid pp 234-235

10 Report 5th N S C App p 27

between members of sub castes of the same caste radical reduction of marriage expenses and abolition of kulinism Caste organisations also tried to bring about marriage reforms in their respective castes There were several organisations which devoted themselves exclusively to marriage reforms

At the very second session (Allahabad 1888) of the National Social Conference the fifth resolution recommended to the members reduction of marriage and other expenses and prescription of scales for persons of various means as well as for presents made by a bride s family to that of a bridegroom The gradual raising of the marriageable age to the standard fixed by the Rajputs was also recommended The remarriage of child widows and inter marriage between those sections of a caste which dined together were also advocated[14] Some widow marriages amongst Hindus were celebrated under the auspices of the *Hindu Women s Remarriage Association* On the 21st February 1889 it was resolved to turn it into a Hindu Marriage Association in order to increase its scope of work and the following resolutions were passed —(1) That the marriage of girls before maturity was contrary to Hindu Shrutis and Smritis and also inexpedient and mischievous (2) That the remarriage of Hindu widows was permissible according to Hindu Shrutis and Smritis (3) That intermarriage between the various sub divisions of any one of the four castes was permitted by the Hindu Shrutis and Smritis and was also expedient (4) That it was inexpedient that a man passed 40 years of age should marry a woman under 15 years of age (5) That the existing ruinous marriage expenses should be curtailed (6) That the evil of selling girls in marriage for money should be put down[15]

The old Punarvivaha Ottejak Association was revived in Bombay under the more correct designation of the Vidhwavivah Association in 1890 under the presidency of the Hon ble Mr Justice Telang[16] In 1890 there were four widow marriages in

14 Report 3rd N S C pp 58 9

15 Ibid p 67

16 Report 4th N S C App p 19

Bombay. The daughter of Mr Subramanyam Iyer, Editor of the Hindu, remarried Three Gujrati Hindu widows also married[17]

The 4th resolution at the 5th National Social Conference expressed its considered opinion that the movement in favour of the remarriage of child widows belonging to the higher castes of Hindus had attained a stage where the active support of those who had openly taken part in the celebration of such marriages would not fail to ensure its ultimate success So the Conference recommended the Social Reform Associations to encourage the movement by rendering such support on all suitable occasions[18]

Ranade always lent his powerful support to the cause of widow marriage and other marriage reforms and supported them with arguments from the scriptures He would always refer to the golden past of Indian history, when many Brahman women devoted themselves exclusively to study and contemplation and so refrained from marriage altogether But this meant no stigma. In other castes marriage took place at a comparatively mature age, and the remarriage of widows was not disfavoured[19] On the authority of the Vedic evidences he tried to show that widow remarriage was valid[19a] He cited the instances of the marriage of Ulupi, the story of Nal Damayanti,[19b] and the story of the daughter of the King of Benares in the Padma Purana.[19c] The *Jain Manuscript of Dr. Bhandarkar* also proved the same[19d] Decay and degeneration set in only later, when women became bracketed with the *Shudras* and condemned to life-long pupilage, first to father, then to husband, and then to son[20] After a perusal of the *Smritis*, Ranade came to the conclusion that the majority of the Smritis favoured the age of twenty-five in the case of males, only one fixed it at eighteen, and another at

17 Ibid, App p 20
18 Report, 5th N S C, p 20
19 Ranade, M G, *Essays*, p 30
19a Ibid, pp. 53-81
19b Ibid, p. 83
19c Ibid, p. 84
19d Ibid, p 85
20 Ibid, p 31

sixteen years of age The maximum limit was fifty [21] Majority of the Smritis favoured 12 or the age of puberty as the marriageable age for girls In Ranade s opinion marriage at the age of 12 and consummation at the age of 16 were normal and authoritative ages for girls [22]

But among marriage reforms the pride of place was occupied by the remarriage of widows Addressing the National Social Conference Amraoti 1897 Ranade said that there had *been in all 25 widow marriages which broken up provincewise* would be as follows —

Punjab 10 Bombay 6 Central Provinces-4 Madras 3 North Western Provinces and Bengal 1 each In the Central Provinces widow marriages took place due to the efforts of Rao *Bahadur* Kolhatkar *In the* Punjab widow marriage found a great advocate in Sant Ram and his friends of the Widow Marriage Association In Bombay Bhagwandas was in the vanguard of widow marriage movement It was in his house that two widow remarriages took place *In* Madras the lead was given by *Vireslingam Pantulu* [24] *Some* of the castes *in* which no remarriage of widows had been celebrated earlier joined in the movement for the first time in 1897 The Maharaja of Nabha tried to better the condition of Hindu widows by inducing influential Hindu gentlemen to support the widow marriage movement [26] Leaders of the Kayastha Prabhu caste of Bombay declared themselves in favour of remarriage of widows In Gujrat the Audicha Brahmans of Damun also favoured the marriage of widows in their caste [27]

Inasmuch as infant marriage was largely responsible for the large number of widows *Malabari would plead for its* prevention It had been made a religious question and Malabari

21 Ibid p 40
22 Ibid p 41
23 Ibid p 49
24 Ibid p 160
25 Ibid p 160
26 Ibid p 160 161
27 Ibid p 161

would advise that the State should take it up as an economic question, leading to poverty and over-population Educated men should pledge themselves not to marry under a certain age, and no educated man should marry a girl too much under his age.[28] The State might encourage late marriage by employing only unmarried persons In school books its evils might be described , and students might be given inducements to remain unmarried [29]

Malabari imputed doubtful motives to the guardians of minor boys who were married to girls senior in age to them. A girl aged 12 to 15 might be married to a boy ten or eight. In such a case the elder brother or father of the boy, who might be a widower, had his own axle to grind When the boy came of age, he would understand the trick, and might commit murder.[30]

These evils could be done away with only if infant marriage was prevented and widows were allowed to marry But there were certain people who judged things from a higher plane and who held Indian womanhood in the highest esteem, and believed that the magnanimity of true womanhood lay in silent suffering Vivekananda's scorn for those who clamoured for widow marriage has already been referred to; Annie Besant[31] also did not like widow marriage. In an essay 'Indian Women' in 'The New York World', June, 1896, she extolled the ideal of Indian womanhood to the sky [32] In 1903, she wrote an article on 'Widow Remarriage' in the Central Hindu College Magazine, in which she highly praised the Hindu ideal of marriage, and opposed widow remarriage, even the remarriage of virgin widows. Her arguments sounded logical. According to her there were more marriageable women than men, and so a surplus of women, either of widows or of spinsters, would always be there. In the West there was a large class of unmarried women, deprived of the joys of wifehood and motherhood, and often compelled to

28 Malabari, B M., *Infant Marriage* etc p 2,
29 Ibid , p. 2
30 Ibid , p 3
31 Cf Chap III.
32 Besant, Annie, op cit , pp 303-310

earn a precarious livelihood by drudgery and prolonged toil So widows should avoid remarriage and lead a dedicated life Her other argument was that the large number of virgin widows could be checked more by preventing premature marriage than by remarrying widows[33]

The supporters of widow remarriage did not minimise the nobility of Hindu widowhood they only wanted it to be volun tary *Chandavarkar for example* was of the view that volun tary widowhood or widowerhood was praiseworthy but enforced widowhood for infant widows and permission to men to marry even in their graves was invidious distinction and must be done away with The reformers only wanted to remove the obstacles *enforced by custom not to compel widow to marry They only* wanted to allow a feeling to grow in society that it was permis sive to a widow to marry if she chose[34]

But these arguments and counter arguments notwithstand ing widow marriage was taking place now and then In 1892 a remarriage was celebrated in Bombay which was also an intermarriage[35] In 1893 three widow marriages took place in Poona one of which was also an intermarriage between sub-castes of Brahmins In the second case the bridegroom was a graduate of the Bombay University *All the three marriages* were cele brated with the consent and co operation of the guardians of the widows[36] *During the year 1895 some ten marriages of widows* took place—five in Bombay Presidency one in Madras and four in the Punjab[37]

During this year Prof D K Karve Secretary of the Widow Marriage Association, travelled in different parts of the Deccan Central Provinces Berar and addressed *meetings at Hubli Shola* pur Pandharpur Kolhapur Sangli Miraj Belgaum Ahmednagar and Bombay Satara Nasik, Dhulia Bhusawal Akola Amraoti Yeotmal Vardha Nagpur Bhandara and Raipur propagating

33 Ibid pp 294 501
34 Chandavarkar N G Speeches etc pp 71 7?
35 Report 6th N S C App p 22.
36 Report 7th N S C p 49
37 Report 9th N.S C p 41

the marriage of widows.[38] In 1897, under the auspices of Widow Marriage Association, Rajamahendry, the following three marriages of virgin Brahman widows were celebrated[39]

Bride with age	*Bridegroom with age*	*Date.*
1. Varalaxmi (20)	T. Rama Rao (30)	1 1 1897
2. Parvatemma (16)	Govorayya Shastri (25)	1 10.1897
3. Saunamma (18)	K Gopalan (30)	23 10.1897

Two widow-remarriages took place in June, 1898.[40] (1) Mr. Lohagamkar of Bijapur, a widower of 40, married a widow of 27. Both bride and bridegroom were Dekhan Brahmans and were married at the Girgaum Remarriage Hall The father of the bridegroom was entirely in favour of the marriage and actually attended the ceremony (2) Another marriage took place at Baroda among the Kayastha Prabhus. The bridegroom was one Dighe. Though extreme orthodoxy was prevalent among the Prabhus at Baroda, and so a great agitation was afoot, yet it was likely to be overcome by the younger generation

In 1899 four widow-remarriages took place in Berar.[41] The National Social Conference in 1899 noted with satisfaction that during the year there had taken place 11 widow marriages in Bombay and Madras It was laid down that it was desirable in all provinces not to discourage marriage of child-widows where their parents or guardians wished to give them in marriage according to the Hindu-Shastras.[42] During the year 1900 quite a few widow remarriages took place On 14 1 1900 the remarriage of a Brahman girl was celebrated at the Widow Remarriage Hall, Bombay. The bride Sri Bai Ramkore had become widow at the age of 12. The bridegroom, Mr. Joshi Liladhar, was aged 30. Another widow marriage had been performed earlier under the auspices of the Arya Samaj at Lahore on 9 1.1900 between Sri Karam Devi and Lala Tola Ram The parties were Kshatriyas and this was the first instance of the remarriage of a lady among

38 Ibid , App p. 30
39. Report, 11th N S C , App. p. 33-34.
40 I S , Vol XVIII, p 489.
41. Report, 13th N S C , App p 67.
42 I S.R , Vol. X, p 158

the Kshatriyas [43] In March 1900 the remarriage of Mahalaks
mamma to Mr N She harri Rau Pantulu took place throu
the influence of R B Vireslingam Pantulu Under the auspic
of the Friends Social Union at Nagpur another remarriage of
girl took place with Mr Waman Rao Joshi [44] During t
same month the remarriage of a Vaishya girl Srimati Parv
with Lala Kali Ram took place under the auspices of the Ar
Samaj at Lahore [45] On the 19th May 1900 the remarriage of
Hindu girl Srimati Vemulkonda Chittamma was performed
Rajamahendry under the auspices of the local Widow Marriag
Association The bridegroom was Mr M Gopalakrishnayya
In June 1900 a virgin girl of 13 years of the Agrawal Ja
Community remarried at Meerut [47] During the same month th
remarriage of a girl Sitabai was performed at Poona Th
bridegroom was Mr Sakharam Pant Patel Headmaster of
Mission School The parties were Deshastha Brahmins Anoth
remarriage of a girl took place among the Aroras at Girot
Shahpur District [48] On June 11 1900 the remarriage of a gi
of the Bania community was performed under the auspices o
Mr Bhagwandas Madhavdas Raghunath at the Widow Remar
riage Hall Bombay [49] A widow marriage took place in Calcutt
between Babu Harin Chandra Sinha Roy of Banihore and
Sarnobala Debi aged 20 years on the 25th of June 1900 Lat
during the year the remarriage of a virgin belonging to a leadin
Mudaliar family was celebrated [50] The widow marriage move
ment made good progress in course of the year so that th
National Social Conference at Lahore in 1900 could registe
with satisfaction that there had been 29 widow marriages durin
the year in the different provinces The Conference expresse

43 ISR Vol X p 161
44 Ibid p 209
45 Ibid p 225
46 Ibid p 305
47 Ibid p 329
48 Ibid p 345
49 Ibid p 352
50 ISR Vol XI p 97

its opinion that where their parents or guardians wished to give them in marriage, the marriage of child-widows deserved every sympathy and encouragement from Reform Associations The Conference further suggested that the improvement of the conditions of child-widows should engage the attention of all the Associations.[51]

The widow marriage movement continued to make steady progress in the following years also A Cutchee Bhatia remarriage was celebrated in Mr Madhavdas Raghunath Das's bungalow in Girgaum in February, 1901. The bridegroom bestowed a donation of Rs. 500 for utilisation in the promotion of widow marriage amongst the Bhatias.[52] In the same month Srimati Sumitra Devi, a child-widow of the Brahman caste, was married to Dr Guru Datta, a Rajput [53] Two remarriage of girls took place in Bengal (April, 1901), one between Babu Issar Chandra Chakravarty and Srimati Bidhumukhi at Dacca, and the other between Babu Batakrishna Chatterjee and Srimati Punada Adhikari in Calcutta. Both the ladies had been for several years inmates of Babu Sasipada Banerjea's Home for Hindu Widows.[54] On May 12, 1901 the remarriage of a Brahman girl, Srimati Radha Rani, with Lala Sheolal Visha, an Arya Samajist, was performed at Jhansi [55] At this very time the Praja Mandal of Mahuwa presented a memorandum to the Gaekwad on the Bill legalising widow marriage, and expressed its opinion that widow marriage was sanctioned by the Vedas [56] In June, 1901, Lala Swarup Lal Agarwal of Muzaffarnagar remarried his virgin daughter to Lala Govind Prasad. The Arya Samajists attended the marriage ceremony.[57] On the 29th of April, 1901, was submitted a memorandum to the Gaekwad for the enactment of a legislation on the line of Act XV of 1856, by the Ahmedabad

51. I S R , Vol. XI, p 175
52. Ibid , p 178
53 Ibid , p 210
54. Ibid , p 281
55 Ibid , p. 297.
56 Ibid p 322
57 Ibid., p 330

Widow Remarriage Association [58]

Though the cause of widow marriage was being popularised all over the country, Bengal which had so far been at the head of progressive movements in India was not showing the vitality worthy of its past. So the National Social Conference in 1901 noted with regret that the movement for the removal of restrictions on the remarriage of child widows which had originated in Bengal* had been allowed to fall into the background there while in other provinces it had been prosecuted with good effects. It suggested that greater efforts should be made to attract public attention to it.[59]

Certain natural calamities such as famine and plague had taken a heavy toll of human life about the year 1900 and this had resulted in the increased number of widows. This phenomenon attracted the attention of reformers and the Bombay Provincial Conference, Sholapur 1902 noted the increased number of widows caused by the havoc of plague and urged to further the cause of widow marriage by enlisting the sympathies or active help of the largest number possible. In this connection the Conference expressed satisfaction on the efforts made in this behalf by Prof. Karve and other promoters of the widow marriage, Widow Home Association of Poona.[60]

The National Social Conference, Ahmedabad 1902 also emphasised the importance of widow marriage which required still greater impetus in view of the increased number of girl widows due to plague, famine and other causes.[61] The

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58 Ibid pp 330-3 0

* At the National Social Conference, Calcutta 1901, a large number of persons from the audience cried out "We don't want widows to marry." Chandavarkar N. G.—Speeches p 101. This showed that there was a reaction against widow marriage in Bengal. Ibid—p 102. But while only in Bengal prejudices against widow marriage increased and were shared even by the educated [illegible] in Madras and other [illegible] prejudice against widow marriage was [illegible] Ibid p 103

59 I.S.R. Vol XIII p 15[illegible]

60 I.S.R. Vol XIII p 72

61 Ibid p 1[illegible]8

Bombay Provincial Conference, Dharwar, 1903, advocated the amelioration of the condition of widows by the promotion of their remarriage, the establishment of Homes with a view to affording them shelter and education, and by the abolition of such cruel practices as their enforced disfigurement.[62] In October, 1903, a widow marriage was celebrated at Mr Bhagwan Das Madhavda's house The bridegroom, Mr Keshav Parasuram Kulgaude, was a Yajurvedi Deshastha Brahman, aged 26 years, the bride Shrimati Yamunabai, was also a Yajurvedi Deshastha Brahman, aged 20 years The bride had become a widow when she was only five years old [63] The National Social Conference at Madras, held in December, 1903, deplored the increase in the number of widows due to plague and famine and other causes in several parts of the country, and invited all humane persons to do all they could to save the poor innocent girls from the customary disfigurement and to place no obstacle, active or passive, to their marrying against and settling in life, if they or their friends chose that course It further exhorted the reformers to do all they could to ameliorate their condition by the establishment and support of Widow's Homes [64]

During 1904 quite a few widow marriages took place—five in the Bombay presidency, two at Badhapore in the Bijnor district; three at Guntur, and one at Calcutta, where every fourth girl was a child-widow, one in Madras and one in Lahore All of these widow marriages were performed among orthodox Hindus, some of whom were Brahmans [65] An England-returned Brahman, an I C S , married the daughter of a remarried couple at Poona and the marriage was attended by a large number of Brahmans The widow-marriage movement was also gaining at Nagpur in the Central Provinces [66]

The Widow Remarriage Association, Upper India, was

62 Ibid , p 359

63 I S.R Vol XIV , p 49

64 Ibid , p 231

65. Chandavarkar, N G , Speeches, p 124.

66 Ibid , p 124

established at Shahjahanpur in May, 1902 under the patronage of His Highness Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwada[66a] for the promotion of remarriage of widows in India and for providing means for the amelioration of their conditions in life Since the establish ment of this Association the total number of widow remarriages celebrated through its efforts or of which information or report was received and published in the *Arya Darpan* (a monthly organ of *widow marriage) from time to time* was 127 of which follow ing was the table[67] —

Caste	up to 1904	In 1905
Brahmans	26	20
Kshatris	1	2
Khatris	35	14
Vaishyas	13	9
Kayasthas	5	2

So whatever the orthodox Hindus and the so called Sana tanists might say about widow remarriage there could be no doubt that liberalism was triumphing and scoring many points True attempts were made to vilify the great reformers For example lectures were delivered and pamphlets issued in which volleys of abuses were levelled at Swami Dayananda Saraswati* and the Arya Samaj for their telling the people that the remar riage of widows was a recognised Vedic institution Many of the Sanatanist Pandits had even succeeded in painting in the *most horrible picture* the attitude of the Arya Samajists but to no effect The Hindus were gradually recognising the validity

66a ' The greatest name in this reform is that of His Highness Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda who not only preached social reform incessantly but gave a clear and bold lead to the whole country by his far reaching measures (M A Buch *Rise of Indian Liberalism* p 107)

67 I S R Vol XVI p 306

* Such a book for example was Swami Dayananda (in the Light of Truth) which was very damaging It tried to show that Dayananda was an imposter that his father was a poor man not of Morvi but of Rampur that his father kept a Kapri (dancing Caste) woman from whose womb Dayananda was born that Dayananda was not a true Samyasi that he had advocated Niyoga because it was prevalent among the Kapris etc etc

of widow remarriage as sanctioned by their scriptures Hundreds of widow marriages were taking place year by year—though not in the same proportion as the actual number of widows—in which the opposition of the castemen gradually subsided in the face of a reasonable persistence. Two notable marriages took place in the Punjab in March, 1906, one at Amritsar in the house of a well-known Arya gentleman, another in the house of a well-known Arya Samajist of Lahore The widowed niece of Mr Roshan Lal, B A , Barrister-at-Law of Lahore, was married to Babu Jagdamba Prasad of Bareilly in the teeth of the bitterest opposition from the castemen of the bride. Her parents too held orthodox views, and it needed a good deal of exertion on the part of Mr Roshan Lal to make them come round to his view [68]

The same year (1906) the Madras Provincial Social Conference among other things recommended that earnest attempts be made to ameliorate the condition of widows by providing them with educational facilities and Widows' Homes after the model of Prof. Karve's, so that they might be more generally recognised than at that time as Sisters of Mercy and useful and contented members of Society; and by placing no obstacles directly or indirectly in the ways of widows' remarrying (at least virgin widows) should the widows themselves or those interested in their welfare be so inclined [69] The Central Provinces Social Conference (May, 1907) similarly recommended the remarriage of child-widows Perhaps the greatest gain was scored by the cause of widow marriage in March, 1908, when Justice Dr (later on Sir) Asutosh Mukherji[70] an orthodox Bengali Brahman,

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68 I.S R., Vol. XVI, p 413.

69 Ibid , pp 523-524

70 It is worth noting that Dr Asutosh Mukherji belonged to such an orthodox family that when Lord Curzon wanted to send him to England to demonstrate to the English people as to what English education had done for Indians, Dr Mukherjee is reported to have replied to His Excellency that he would not be able to go to England as his mother did not want him to go there, and that his mother's wishes were more binding upon him than any one else's wishes

gave his widowed daughter aged twelve years in marriage to a young Bengali to whom he also gave Rs 50 000 This was a grand move in the direction of social reform [7]

These are only a few examples of widow marriage taken from different parts and castes of the country But it is not the number that counts it is rather the spirit that had come over the enlightened section of the community which matters [8] Widow remarriage continued to be advocated and performed year after year by different organisations all over the country

Other marriage reforms received equal or even greater attention of the National Social Conference and other agencies of reform We have noted that at its Allahabad session (1888) by the fifth resolution among other things it recommended to its members the reduction of birth marriage and other expenses and prescription of scales for persons of various means as well

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abolished the customs of touching Toran in the night According to this custom the bridegroom's pompous procession was paraded to the brides' house on the night preceding the celebration of marriage ceremony with a good number of torches lighted and fire works let off and accompanied by dancing girls This practice involved an unnecessary expense of a considerable sum and was also against the principles of the Jain religion [76] Another practice among the Jains was that of giving sumptuous feasts etc and distributing sweets among the members of the community during the first pregnancy of a married woman This custom also imposed an expense of Rs 300/ or a sum approaching it on the family of her parents who were required to make presents of costly clothing and gold and silver ornaments to the family of her husband on account of the said ceremony Lala Chhoga Lal Ajmeri Proprietor of the Jain Prabhakar did not observe this custom in the case of his own wife in spite of the strong opposition of his parents elder brothers and the Panchayat and he gave up his claim to Rs 500 which his father in law promised to pay him in the event of his conforming to the custom This had a good result Another person of equal zeal and spirit followed his example Thus this custom was gradually discouraged [77]

As in other fields of social reform the Arya Samajists encouraged marriage reforms also by lectures tracts and other practical modes of action They fixed the marriageable age of boys and girls at 25 and 16 respectively They also advocated the remarriage of widows but only with widowers [78] All the Sewaks (lay members) of the 2nd grade of the Dev Samaj were

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76. Ibid p 55
77 Ibid p 55
78 Ibid p 53 It is remarkable that at a time when the proposal to raise the Age of Consent to 12 had given rise to a storm of protest in the country the Arya Samajists had put such an advanced limit on the age of both boys and girls for marriage How frayed tempers were on the Age of Consent Bill can be gathered from the fact that one evening pistol-shots were fired at B C Pal one of the supporters of the Bill in Calcutta (Pal B C *Memories* Vol II p 117)

pledged not to marry their sons and daughters under the ages of 18 and 14 respectively. The Sewaks in the higher grade accepted the limits of 20 and 16 years Extravagance in marriage expenses was also severely discouraged and obscene songs in marriage and other festivals were prohibited. The Dev Samaj also discouraged polygamy and enforced widowhood and the system of gosha [79]

The Hindu Social Reform Association, Hyderabad (Sind), among other things aimed at discouraging infant marriage and encouraging intermarriages among the sub-sections of the same caste, and curtailing marriage and funeral expenses [80]

The 13th National Social Conference by its Resolution No XII deprecated the practice of arranging marriages on the Badala or Golawat (exchange)* system prevailing in certain castes in the North Western Provinces and Oudh, which was, in the opinion of the Conference, fraught with the degradation of the marriage tie to the same extent as that of the sale of girls in marriage, and, as such, was to be discouraged by all means, gradually enlarging the circle of sub-castes eligible for the choice of marriage alliance [81]

The Palanpur Social and Literary Association Palanpur, (established in May, 1898) required from its members non-attendance at unequal marriages, non-performance of the marriage of bridegrooms under 17 and brides under 13, consulting grown-up sons or daughters about their betrothal, no giving or acceptance of Pullas other than what was recognised by the caste, such as Rs 501/- among the Jains [82]

In the Rajputana Agency, the Walterkrita Hitkarini Sabha

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79 Report, 7th N S C, p 59

80. Report, 8th N S C, p 64

* This system was also known in certain parts of North Bihar as Golat-Palat in which the sister of a youngman would be given in marriage to another, and the latter's sister would be given away in marriage to the former This was a very bad custom judged from the Hindu point of view. Under this system one's own sister would be one's sister-in-law, which would be abhorrent to any Hindu. Naturally this sort of marriage entailed a great social stigma

81 Report, 13th N S C, p 52

82. Ibid, App pp 41-42

carried on under the Rajput rulers themselves the work of raising the age limit of marriage of girls among Rajputs Charans and other castes The age limit was 14 and the rules laid down by the Sabha were largely observed The example of Rajputana was followed also in Malwa and other parts of India[83] The movement was gaining ground and Ranade could declare with satisfaction that reports of National Social Conference and the various Social Reform Associations in different provinces indicated that the marriageable ages of both boys and girls were being slowly raised up Most of the caste associations recognised the age of 12 as suitable for the marriage of girls * The Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj had forged far ahead in this direction[84]

There were not only resolutions advocating marriage reforms but practical steps implementing the resolutions were also being taken here and there At the National Social Conference 1897 Ranade could cite a few instances In Bengal intermarriage between two subdivisions of the Kayastha community took place In the Punjab there was a betrothal between two sub castes of the Serin community Many of the widow marriages were also instances of intermarriage For the first time in 1896 two instances of intermarriage between Madrasi and Bengali gentlemen and ladies were reported In the North Western Provinces also there were instances of fusion between sub-divisions of the Kayastha caste In Gujrat a similar tendency was visible in some of the castes[85]

Similarly reduction of extravagant expenses in marriage

83 Ranade M G *Essays* p 50

* In the Punjab the Aurorbans Sabha resolved that no girl belonging to the caste should be given in marriage before 1? The Madras Provincial Social Conference the Godavary District Conference and the Hindu Social Reform Association at Madras moved for age limit on the marriage of boys and old men (Ranade M G *Essays* p 0

The Arya Samaj fixed the minimum marriageable age at 16 for girls and at 25 for boys and it encouraged celibacy to later ages (Rai Lala Lajpat *The Arya Samaj* p 149)

84 Ranade M G *Essays* p 9]

85 Ibid p 162

was preached and, as far as practicable, practised. Leading Kayastha gentlemen of Calcutta, including Sir Romesh Chandra Mitra and Hon'ble Mr. Madhav Chandra Ghose, started a movement with this end in view. They passed several resolutions against extravagance in marriage In the North-Western Provinces the Kayasthas, the Bhargavas, the Chaturvedis, the Vaishyas, the Jains and the other castes tried to lay down sliding scales of marriage expenditure, curtailing extravagance under many heads, abolishing nautch parties, fire works and other useless items In the Punjab, the Aurorbans considerably reduced the extravagance in marriage expenses On the Bombay side the Bhatia Mandal and the Dasa Oswal Jains successfully worked in the same direction In Baroda the Dasa Porwad Bania caste people were moving in the same direction Many non-Rajput castes in Rajputana and Malwa followed the example of the Rajput Hitkarini Sabha [86]

The National Social Conference, 1899, expressed satisfaction with the progress made by the movement for marriage reforms Reports from the various provinces, specially Bombay, Madras and the Punjab and from several caste associations such as the Rajput and Vaishya Sabhas and other bodies showed earnest efforts being made to raise the marriageable age of boys and girls, to prevent the exaction of large sums of money and the sale of girls for money and to curtail expenses on marriage occasions The Conference recommended that the age-limit for marriage of girls was to be raised to 12 or 14 and for boys to 18 or 21, and the efforts were to continue until the standards both in regard to age and expenditure laid down by the Walterkrita Rajputra Hitkarini Sabha became the rule with all castes throughout India [87]

The Conference (1899) also noted with approval that in Bombay and Madras several intermarriages took place between subcastes of the more influential Brahman communities, and, as it was not opposed to the Shastras, it was recommended to

86 Ibid., pp. 164-165

87. I S R , Vol X, p 157

the special notice of all caste associations The practice of arranging marriages on the Badla or Golawat system prevalent in North Western Provinces and Oudh in certain castes was also denounced as degrading as the sale of girls in marriage[88] It was during 1899 that under the auspices of the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association the establishment of a Matrimonial Bureau was decided upon It was to maintain a private and confidential register of those who were desirous of bringing about inter marriages between subsections of the various castes[89]

The year 1899 registered marked progress in the field of marriage reform In Benaras the local Brahman community admitted into caste some widows who had been unfortunately misled into sin after they had done penance In Bombay 5 late marriages took place in which the age of girls was over 16 In Madras Rai Bahadur Vireslingam s adopted daughter s age was 21 at the time of marriage In the Punjab Lala Amolikram s daughter was married when she was 19 Several caste Conferences passed resolutions raising the age of marriage for example the Vaishya Conference fixed the age of girls at 12 and the Rajput and Malwa Sabha fixed the age at 14 In all there were 25 late marriages in Bombay where the age of girls was over 15 Two intermarriages in Madras and four in Bombay between sub castes of the same caste took place The Khatris of Lahore passed a resolution encouraging intermarriage in their caste Caste Conferences took active steps to curtail extravagant expenditure The Rajput Sabha held at Agra passed a resolution against demanding excessive dowry and also against polygamy The Khatri Sabha at Lahore passed a resolution enjoining the observance of monogamy Similar efforts were made at Satara R B V K Kirtikar Government Pleader Bombay set a good example in this respect to his community and to other castes also Messrs Kale and Bhagwat rendered similar service at Satara in setting good example to the people[90]

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88 Ibid p 158

89 Ibid p 167

90 Ibid p 174

Even in Bengal, which was considered to be socially conservative at that time, voice was being raised against evils in marriage system Protesting against the heavy dowries extracted from the fathers of brides, the *Bengali* (June, 1900) said, "The mercenary spirit, the spirit of greed, has laid hold of our community, it should be ruthlessly suppressed by social rules, which none dare disregard except at the risk of excommunication "[91] In July, 1900, an intercaste marriage took place at Calcutta between Babu Ananta Narain Sen of Barisal and Sofia Nirajbala, aged 18 years, fourth daughter of Mr Sasipada Banerjea of Baranagar [92]

It was about this time that Mrs Besant proposed to admit only bachelors into the Central Hindu College, Benaras, and fixed in one of her lectures 18 and 14 as the age-limits for boys and girls respectively to enter into matrimony [93]

The Lahore session (1900) of the National Social Conference noted with satisfaction that an organised movement had been started in the Deccan to secure renewed sanction of the religious head of the Brahman community to intermarriage between the sub-castes of that community which at the time dined together, and as this was a reform which was not opposed to Shastras, the Conference recommended the subject to the special notice of all caste associations The Conference was of opinion that unless such unions were encouraged in the smaller castes, no practical reform with regard to several marriage customs was permanently possible under the prevailing conditions.[94] It was a matter of great satisfaction for the Conference that most of the reports received from the various provinces furnished evidence that earnest efforts were being made to raise the marriageable age of boys and girls, to prevent the exaction of large sums of money and to curtail expenditure on marriage occasions But in the opinion of the Conference further improvement was

91. Quoted in Ibid , p 253

92 Ibid , p.

93 I S R , Vol XI, p 161

94 Ibid , p 175

not possible until the age for girls was raised from 11 to 14 and that for boys was raised from 18 to 21 * The Conference accordingly recommended that local associations formed for the promotion of marriage reforms should not slacken their efforts until the standard laid down by the Walterkrit Rajput Hitkarini Sabha and acted upon by most of the Rajput States in that agency and Malwa had become the rule with all castes through out India, and the scales of expenditure laid down by the same organisation had been accepted as the maximum limit The Conference further deprecated the sale of girls in marriage ill assorted marriages polygamy and exchange or Badla marriages as opposed to the spirit of the Shastras and abuse of the institution of marriage tending to degrade the marriage tie So it recommended that strenuous efforts should be made by reform Sabhas and Associations to discourage these abuses [9]

By the year 1901 one of the Arya Samajas in the North made it a rule that no person who married his sons or daughters below the ages of 25 and 16 respectively would continue to be a member of the Samaj The Indian Social Reformer* deprecated coercion and argued that the parents should have the liberty to marry their sons and daughters at whatever age they might deem fit in each individual case and the age of marriage was bound to be gradually raised in accordance with the changing notions of the time and the varying conditions of life [96] Exactly this note was struct by

* It is a tribute to the advanced social ideas of the Arya Samaj that while the N S C was agitating for raising the marriage age for boys and girls to 18 and 14 respectively the Arya Samaj had already fixed the limit at 25 and 16 respectively

95 I S R Vol XI p 175

* It is strange that the *Indian Social Reformer* the organ of the most advanced section of the Indian social reformers should have deprecated coercion in the cause of social reform It was communal coercion and not coercion by the State When Tilak had opposed coercion by the State while agitating against the Age of Consent Bill he had been dubbed as a reactionary an opportunist who wanted to make political capital out of the innate conservatism of the ignorant masses But Tilak in fact had argued nothing more than this that there should be no reform forced upon the people by a Government alien in sympathy and sentiments

96 I S R Vol XI p 218

Chandavarkar when he said that the question of livelihood was growing more and more acute and parents would defer the marriage of their sons to 18 or 20 years of age.[97] The National Social Conference, 1901, was of opinion that a relaxation of the rules regarding the regulation of intermarriage between sub-castes would facilitate the solution of the several questions connected with marriage reform. It also noted with satisfaction advance made in the raising of the marriageable age for boys and girls and hoped that the efforts made in that direction would be steadily continued. In its opinion excessive marriage expenses, specially the demands made on the parents and guardians of the brides and the bridegrooms, constituted a serious social evil, and recommended the curtailment of such expenses.[98]

Similarly the Provincial Social Reform Conference, Madras Presidency (Cocanada, 14 June, 1902) noted with pleasure the efforts being made by the several Social Reform Associations in the Presidency to curtail extravagant expenditure on marriage occasions, to discourage the exaction of money payments by way of Sulkam, and to discourage early and unequal marriages, and recommended that further endeavours be made to bring them into practical effect.[99] The Bombay Provincial Conference, Sholapur, 1902 urged the raising of the age of marriage of boys and girls respectively to at least 18 and 12 and that of consummation respectively to 22 and 16, intermarriage between the interdining sub-castes and interdining and intermarriage between sub-castes of one caste.[100]

The National Social Conference (Ahmedabad 1902) emphasised bringing about a closer communion between the subdivisions of castes by means of intermarriages and interdining; noted with satisfaction that the age of marriage both for boys and girls had shown a decided tendency to rise in many parts of the country, and impressed on all social reform bodies and advocates

97 Chandavarkar, N G., *Speeches*, p 22

98 I S R , Vol XII, p. 158

99 Ibid , p 325

100 I S R , Vol XIII, p 79.

to press forward this most important item of the social programme by endeavouring to raise the marriage age of girls to 16 and of boys to 20 It condemned the prevalence of polygamy among certain communities of Hindus as a blot on Indian civilisation and as repugnant to the sentiment of the majority of the Indian people and expressed its sympathy with all measures adopted to do away with this reproach It also condemned the practice of extravagant expenditure on marriage whether in the shape of a payment for the bride or the bridegroom or in feasts and entertainments [101] On the 19th December 1902, Santimoyi Devi youngest daughter of Babu Sasipada Banerjea of Baranagar, aged 15 years 9 months, was married to Bisheshwar Sen Muzumdar It was an inter caste marriage the bride belonging to the Brahman caste while the bridegroom to the Vaidya (Physician) caste [102] The Bombay Provincial Conference (Dharwar 1903) condemned child marriage and recommended that the age of marriage be raised to 20 in the case of boys and 14 in the case of girls consummation to be postponed at least until the twenty second and sixteenth years respectively [103] The Conference reaffirmed the necessity of further steps being taken to bring members of different castes and sub castes together so as to promote goodwill and love between all classes by such means as holding social gatherings between members of different castes removing all hindrances in the way of inter dining of members of the different sub sections of the same caste and promoting intermarriages between persons of sub castes who could then dine together It regarded the growing evil of extracting Var Dakshina or Hunda to be as reprehensible as that of the sale of brides, and recommended that such dowry as parents of girls were willing to give be given in such a manner as to exclusively benefit the married couple and their issue It also condemned extravagant expenditure in marriage and other ceremonies [104]

101 Ibid p 168
102 Ibid p 195
103 Ibid p 350
104 Ibid p 359

The National Social Conference, Madras, 1903, rejoiced that according to the returns of the recent census (1901) the age of marriage for both boys and girls had shown a decided tendency to rise in many parts of the country, and urged all social reform bodies and advocates to make use of the favourable opportunity to press forward this most important item of social reform programme[105] It reiterated the desirability of bringing about a closer communion between the sub-divisions of castes by means of intermarriages and interdinning.[106]

The Madras Provincial Social Conference, 1906, viewed with concern the increasing tendency, especially on the part of the well-to-do and educated men, to make marriage a mercenary transaction, in demanding ruinous Varasulkas and the growing tendency to increase the marriage expenses in many directions and much beyond the means of the parties.[107] In a similar vein, the Central Provinces Social Conference, May 1907, suggested further raising the marriageable age of boys and girls, discouragement of making extortionate demands in matrimonial alliances, curtailment of unnecessary and extortionate marriage expenses, and encouragement of intermarriages and interdining between the sub-castes and thereby attempting to break up the sub-caste barriers[108]*

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105 I S R , Vol. XIV , p 231

106 Ibid , p

107 Ibid , pp. 523-524

108 I S R , Vol XVII, p 428

* Though these various resolutions at various Conferences were being passed, not much progress was made from the numerical point But a definite change in spirit was visible The findings of the census (1911) are instructive in this respect ·

"In the general population there has been practically no change since 1891 in the prevalence of infant marriage amongst males The proportion of child wives is higher by a fraction than it was in 1901, but a good deal less than at the preceding census" (Census of India, 1911,Vol I, Part I, p. 268) The statistics "show that while the Hindus as a body are more addicted to infant marriage than any other religious community, the high castes usually are far less prone to it than the low." (Ibid , p. 268) .."the custom (of infant marriage) originated with high caste Hindus and spread gradually from them to the lower castes" (Ibid , p 269)

As the years passed by the reformers became more radical in their views At the National Social Conference held at Bankipore in 1912 it was resolved that the minimum marriageable age for girls should be raised to 16 and for boys to 25 to afford them opportunities for their physical and intellectual development [109]

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusion as to whether infant marriage is becoming more or less common, but (there is) slight diminution of the practice The figures of 1901 were abnormal owing to the famines of 1897 and 1900 and it is safer to take the year 1891 as the basis of comparison There are now 18 Hindu girls per mille who are married at the age 0 5 as compared with only sixteen at that time but at the age 5 10 the proportion has fallen from 146 to 132 and at 10 15 from 542 to 488 Among Muhammadans the proportion at the first mentioned age period has fallen from 7 to 5 and the second from 83 to 65 and at the third from 474 to 393

Amongst the low castes with whom the practice is most common the feeling in favour of infant marriage is extremely strong so much so that parents who fail to give their children in marriage at an early age often find great difficulty in doing so afterwards the idea being that the delay must be due to the existence of some physical or mental defect Many of these castes regard infant marriage as a badge of respectability and encourage it on that account The more enlightened members of the higher castes who do not allow widows to remarry are beginning to realise how wrong it is to expose their daughters to the risk of life long widowhood and a feeling against infant marriage is thus springing up amongst them (Ibid p 271)

The Maithil Brahmans of Bihar are endeavouring to fix the minimum age for marriage at 12 in the case of females and 16 in the case of males In various parts of India numerous castes have passed similar resolutions at their conferences The Muhiyal Brahmans of the Punjab have declared 13 & 18 to be the minimum age limit for girls and boys respectively and in some parts even the lower castes are beginning to discourage the practice The Goalas of Bihar who have recently shown much activity in trying to raise themselves are endeavouring to put a stop to infant marriage in their community So also are the Namasudras of Bengal (Ibid pp 271 272)

It may also be gathered from the above that the castes and classes most enlightened hence most imbued with the spirit of nationalism were also most enthusiastic about social reform

109 Report 26th N S C p 13

The Bombay Provincial Social Conference, 1914, considered it desirable that the minimum age of boys and girls be 21 and 16 respectively.[110]

The students also did what they could against the evil of dowry. To take but one example, in accordance with a resolution of the First Session of the Madras Students' Convention, an Anti-Dowry League was started, and a few youngmen joined as members. It was open to all, both men and women, married and unmarried, throughout the Madras Presidency, Mysore and Hyderabad. All had to make certain promises. The promise for the unmarried member was, "I promise not to demand any dowry and shall try my best to dissuade my parents (or guardians) from demanding dowry on my behalf. After I am married, I promise not to demand dowry for my children." The promise for a married member was "I promise not to demand any dowry for my children." The general promise was, "I promise to exert all my influence to put down the dowry system, to expose its evils wherever it exists, and to try and make all my friends, acquaintances and relatives members of the League.' In every case of marriage of a member of the League, information was required to be sent to the Secretary, concerning the matter of dowry and of gifts offered and accepted as well as the status of the bride's father. Similar Leagues had already been started in some parts of Northern India. The League was inaugurated in the first week of February.[111]

Apart from these activities, attempts were also made during the period under review to bring about marriage reforms through legislation, both in British India and the Native States. Though in British India little was achieved, the Native States forged ahead with social legislation.

In 1894, the Mysore Government passed two Regulations preventing early and ill-assorted marriages.[112] Two similar Bills were brought into the Legislative Council of the Madras Govern-

110 Report, *Bombay Provincial Social Conference*, 1914, p 90

111 I S R, Vol XXVII, p 230

112 Ranade, M G, *Essays*, p 50

ment proposing age limit but they were dropped because of the objection of the Government of India[113] *On the Malabar coast a special Marriage Law was favoured by the authorities*[114] In the Baroda State a measure for the prevention of infant marriage was brought and a Draft Bill was prepared but it was dropped *for the time being due to unforeseen circumstances*[115] *According* to Manibhai J Dewan Baroda the nature of the Bill was quite voluntary The essence of the whole is that the initiative is left entirely to the people the adoption of the reforms would be their own voluntary act and the coercive power of the law will be lent to them in a suitable and reasonable manner at their own request Thus the action of Government becomes altogether free from even the appearance of any undue interference with social matters *or legislative dictation*[116]

The Baroda Child Marriage Prevention Act was to operate from 1903 to 1913 The term 'minor conveyed a girl who had not finished her fourteenth year and a boy who had not finished his 18th year The maximum penalty for the violation of the law was Rs one hundred *but the penalty was not of itself to be* enough to invalidate a marriage[117] This Act gave great satisfaction and encouragement to the promoters of social reform The Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association presented a memorandum to Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda congratulating him on his passing the Act[118]

There was increasing faith in social legislation in Baroda Numerous applications from various castes or communities for *the prevention of their social abuses were submitted to the* Gaekwad The Kathiawad Kunbis sought for legislation to regulate the marriageable age for their boys and girls and to *control their nuptial expenses* The Brahmans of Okhlamandal applied for a law penalising the sale of girls in marriage or the

113 Ibid p 50
114 Ibid p 51
115 Ibid p 51
116 Report 7th N S C p 70
117 I S R Vol XIII pp 358 359
118 I S R Vol XIV p 52

acceptance of exorbitant sums of money in the name of dowry The Banias of Sinore applied praying to make the remarriage of widow compulsory[119]

When Mr Basu brought forward his Civil Marriage Bill aiming at introducing necessary reforms in the institution of marriage, there was a storm against it Referring to the allegation that Basu's Civil Marriage Bill would permit divorce, Lady Chandavarkar said, "Men can marry a second time when the first wife is living and thus they have a privilege very akin to divorce, and it seems that our brethren are afraid that this privilege of theirs may be usurped by women too if this Bill is passed I am compelled to say frankly that this only shows their selfishness What will really happen is not that woman will frequently sue for divorce if the Bill becomes law, but that those wives whose marriage was performed in accordance with the provision of this law, will be able to exercise a certain amount of control over ill-behaved husbands"[120]

This Bill (Basu's Civil Marriage Bill) was unfortunately defeated and Reform Associations all over the country expressed their regret The 6th United Provinces Social Conference at Cawnpore (April, 1912) expressed deep regret at it and respectfully represented to Government the imperative need of a legislation to make it clear beyond doubt that marriages might be lawfully contracted between different sects and castes of the Hindu community and prayed that a Bill might be introduced and passed at an early date with such safeguards and reservations as regards inheritance and succession etc as might be deemed necessary.[121]

At the 28th National Social Conference (Madras 1914) the Yuvaraj of Mysore deplored that Mr Basu's Civil Marriage Bill of 1911, providing for free intermarriages among all classes of Hinduism without the penalty of having to deny their ancient faith, did not pass into law[122] But the demand for a progressive

119 Report, 21st N S.C , p 11
120 I S R , XXII, p 77
121 Ibid , p 392.
122 Report, 28th N S C , p 27.

marriage legislation continued unabated The Bombay Provincial Social Conference (1916) expressed its opinion that special legislation be passed to place beyond doubt the validity of marriages between Hindus belonging to different castes It further recommended the amendment of the Special Marriage Act of 1872 removing the requirement that parties marrying under that Act should declare that they did not profess any particular religion It also demanded legislation allowing Sagotra marriage outside certain degrees of blood relationship[123] At the Madras Provincial Social Conference 1918 Sarojini Naidu moved a resolution that a law providing a valid form of marriage open to all persons professing the Hindu religion irrespective of caste or sect should be enacted by the Indian Legislature[124]

But while British India was lagging behind in social legislation Native States were more forward in undertaking social legislation on progressive lines In Indore the Civil Marriage Act I of 1916 was passed by which any Indian only residing in Indore State for 14 days before marriage could marry any other Indian of a different caste or nationality without offence to his religious belief subject to the following conditions —(1) Neither party must have a husband or wife living (2) the man must have completed 18 years of age and the woman 14 years, (3) each party must have obtained the consent of parents or guardians if below 21 or 18 years of age respectively and (4) the parties must not be related to each other in any degree of consanguinity or affinity which would render a marriage between them illegal[125]

We find thus that marriage reforms were being propagated and brought into practice because those who sought the good of the Nation were firmly convinced that a degenerate marriage system was inconsistent with a progressive national life and policy

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123 I S R Vol XXVIII p 126

124 Report *Madras Provincial Social Conference* 1918 p 46

125 From the *Hindu* Madras incorporated in I.S R Vol XXVII p 45

NINE

Uplift of the Downtrodden

The uplift of the submerged masses of India was as, if not more, important as the progress and education of women, if national life was to be built up on a sound basis Even the British rule, with its revolutionary role in other respects, had been able to do little for the education of the masses At the very beginning of English education in India, there was a controversy whether the masses were to be educated or the classes. Sir Henry Lawrence stood for the education of the classes whereas Sir John Lawrence stood for the education of the masses The issue, however, was decided in favour of the classes,[1] and the vast masses continued to live in utter ignorance of modern ideas. Lowest on the rung of the social ladder were the untouchables, who naturally suffered most

Their deplorable condition aroused the sympathy of educated Hindus, and some of the latter in Bombay started an Association and some schools for them in 1855 But that attempt was short-lived, because the time was not ripe for it [2] In 1870 Keshab Chandra Sen returned from England and delivered a lecture in Bombay calling upon the members of the Prarthana Samaj to do something practical to elevate the lower castes Accordingly the leaders of the Samaj established Night Schools and two of these schools were for the so-called untouchable classes [3] In 1891 Mr Damodhar Sukadwalla started at his

1 Chandavarkar, N G *Speeches*, p, 147
2 Ibid , p 147
3. Ibid , p 147

own expense a third school for Mahars at Byculla in Bombay It was in fact the Prarthana Samaj which initiated the movement for the elevation of the status of the depressed classes The country was also under a debt of gratitude to the Christian missionaries to the Brahmo Samaj to Col Olcott and the Theosophists and to Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the Arya Samaj for what had been done for the amelioration of the depressed classes[4]

From the Nationalist point of view the Arya Samaj had done the utmost for the betterment of the lot of the downtrodden The social ideas of the Arya Samaj were the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men the equality of the sexes absolute justice and fair play between man and men and nations and nations equal opportunities to all according to their nature *Karma* and merit and love and charity towards all[5] In pursuance of these ideals it took great interest in the social uplift of the lower classes The Arya Samajists raised the status of castes not entitled to wear the sacred thread by admitting them to that privilege The untouchables were also raised to the rank of touchables They were educated to higher social ideals with a view to eventually raising them to social equality with other Hindus *This work was done by the Arya Samaj as such as* well as by special organisation supported by the Arya Samaj and affiliated directly or indirectly to the latter[6]

According to Lala Lajpat Rai the cause of the depressed classes combined in it the b st of religion the best of humanity and the best of nationalism In his opinion it was a cause worthy of the best energies and the most strenuous efforts of a large number of India s such daughters and sons as believed that 'Life was a mission and duty its highest Law and the best fulfilment of that duty lay in the service and uplifting of those whom human tyranny and prejudices had put out of the pale of humanity and who were unfortunately the victims of the idea

4 Ibid p 148
5 Rai Lala Lajpat *The Arya Samaj* pp 136-137
6 Ibid p 222

that they deserved no better fate. Rai thought that no greater wrong could be done to a human being endowed with intellect then to put him into circumstances which would make him believe that he was eternally doomed to a life of ignorance, servitude and misery, and that in him any sort of ambition for his betterment was a sin. No slavery, Rai would declare, was more harmful than that of mind, and no sin was greater than to keep human beings in perpetual bondage. It was bad enough to enslave people, but to create and perpetuate circumstances, which prevented them from breaking their chains and becoming free, was infamous.[7]

There could be no real progress when an important limb of the nation was atrophied. So long as the depressed classes remained where they were, there was no hope of any improvement.[8]

Vivekananda, the Prophet of Awakened India, was even more emphatic and pronounced in his sympathies for the downtrodden. He would say that if the Brahman had more aptitude for learning on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, no more money was to be spent over the Brahmans' education, and all was to be spent on the Pariah's education. All the gift must be given to the weak, for there it was needed most. Born clever, the Brahman could educate himself without help. But others who had not been born clever must have all the teaching and all the teachers. Vivekananda made a most stirring call to his people, "Our poor people, these downtrodden masses of India, therefore, require to hear and to know what they really are. Aye, let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth weakness or strength, hear and learn, that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind everyone, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good."[9]

The Swami wanted the masses to be raised up both mate-

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7. Ibid., pp. 223-224

8. Ibid., p. 223

9. Vivekananda, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 193

nally and culturally and for the latter he would always emphasise the importance of the study of Sanskrit Language—the language of philosophy religion and culture No doubt the masses would get their ideas and information through the medium of the vernaculars but something more was necessary for them, they were also to be given culture Otherwise there could be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses If the masses did not know Sanskrit there would be another caste created having the advantage of the Sanskrit language * This class would quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same So in the opinion of the Swami the only safety to the lower castes the only way to raise their condition was to study Sanskrit The only way to bring about the levelling of castes was to appropriate the culture the education which was the strength of the higher castes [10] But his radicalism notwithstanding his solution of the caste problem in India was not to degrade the higher castes not to crush out the Brahman [11] but to raise others He wanted a Brahman to prove his pretensions first by manifesting his spirituality and next by raising others to the same status He could only show his Brahmanhood by raising the non Brahmans around him The Swami advised the non Brahmans also not to spend their energy in kindling the fire of caste hatred Not a step forward could be taken not one difficulty removed by inter caste quarrels [12]

Vivekananda had a true insight into the problems of the poor in India He was fully aware of the difficulty that stood

* How jealously the Brahmans wanted to monopolise the knowledge of Sanskrit and how they discouraged non Brahmans from learning it is best illustrated by an incident in M R Jayakar s life Jayakar s Sanskrit teacher at school was a conservative Brahman He was shocked at a non Brahman offering Sanskrit in spite of his wishes and pressures to the contrary Having failed in his attempts he ordered Jayakar to leave the class room as punishment and stand for ten days on a bench outside the class room in the public corridor Jayakar bore this punishment for over a week On the ninth day the Principal came to know of the truth and asked him to join the class (Jayakar M R op cit p 13)

10 Vivekananda *Works* Vol III p 291

11 Ibid p 293

12 Ibid Vol IV p 246.

in the way of the poor being educated. That difficulty was not to be solved even if a free school was started in every village, because the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school.* So the Swami preached that if the poor could not come to receive education, education itself must go to the poor. There were sannyasins going from village to village to teach religion Some of these wandering monks, he would say, might be organised as teachers of secular things also They would go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. If two of these men went to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps etc, they could teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they could give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they could get in a life-time through books. But for that work organisation was required, and for organisation money was required It was to collect money for this purpose that the Swami went to America[13]

The Swami always exhorted his countrymen to remember the lower classes—the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper were all their flesh and blood, their brothers.[14] In his opinion the chief cause of India's ruin had been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If India was to rise again, she could do so by spreading education among the masses A great fuss had been made for half a century about social reform, and travelling through various places of India for about ten years the Swami had observed the country full of social reform associations, but he had been pained to find that not one association existed for them by sucking whose blood the people known as 'gentlemen' had become and

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* This problem is still there as acute as then, and those who launch the scheme of free and compulsory primary education in India should bear it in mind

13 Vivekananda, *Works*, Vol, IV, p 309

14 Ibid, p 413

continued to be known as gentlemen.[15] The Swami's heart was always with the poor. He wanted greater part of the education to the poor to be given orally because time yet was not ripe for schools. Gradually in the main centres lessons in agriculture and industry were to be imparted. For the furtherance of Arts workshops were to be established. Associations were to be established. Associations were to be started for the sale in Europe and America of the manufactures from these workshops.[16]

Vivekananda was surprised to find that no religion on earth preached the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and yet no religion trod upon the neck of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.[17] So he advocated the elevation of the masses without in any way injuring religion.[18] Like Mahatma Gandhi the Swami believed that the *nation lived in the cottage and so the main plank in the reconstruction of national life should be the reconstruction of the cottage.* But strangely enough Vivekananda would say the modern social reformers had lost sight of this very vital problem and were very busy about widow remarriage. *Though he sympathised* with every reform he did not believe that the fate of a *nation* depended upon the number of husbands its widows got, but upon the condition of the masses. The real problem before the nation builders in India was to give the people back *their* lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature.[19] Time and again the Swami would harp upon the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries *trained in this college*.[20]

He would ask the reformers to buy some magic lanterns, maps, globes etc. and gather every evening a crowd of the poor

15 Ibid., p. 415
16 Ibid., pp. 417-418
17 Ibid., Vol. V, p. 13
18 Ibid., p. 25
19 Ibid., p. 25
20 Ibid., p. 6

and the low, even the Pariahs, and lecture to them about religion first, and then teach them through the magic lanterns and other things, astronomy, geography etc in the dialect of the people[21] He would call upon his compatriots to pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India who were held fast by povery, priestcraft and tyranny. Himself poor, the Swami loved the poor. "Him I call a Mahatma (Great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul)".[22]

The Swami saw the bright side of the Indian masses India was, no doubt, awfully poor, and her masses were very ignorant about secular things But the Indian masses were very good, because poverty in India was not a crime. They were not violent. People would mob a man wearing peculiar dress in England and America, but a man in India would not be mobbed because of peculiar dress. In every other respect, according to Vivekananda, our masses were much more civilised than the European masses[23] In order to raise them secular education must be imparted to the masses. All the ideals were to be brought slowly down among them. They were slowly to be raised up to equality. But the Swami wanted that even secular knowledge should be imparted through religion.[24] He was proud of the fact that while in Europe the object of the peoples was to exterminate all in order to live themselves, the aim of the Aryans was to raise all up to their own level, nay even to a higher level than themselves The means of European civilisation was the sword; of the Aryans, the division into different *Varnas*. The system of division into different Varnas was the stepping-stone to civilisation, making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. The Swami would say in Europe it was everywhere victory to the strong, and death to the weak, in the land of Bharat every social rule was for the protection of the weak.[25]

21 Ibid , p 29
22 Ibid , p 45
23 Ibid , p 143
24 Ibid., p 143.
25. Ibid , p 439

In the unequal fight between the rich and the poor Swami Vivekananda was always on the side of the latter He was even prepared to say that he was a socialist not because he thought that it was a perfect system but because to him half a loaf was better than no bread [26] His defence was that other systems had been tried and found wanting now this one was to be tried — if for nothing else at least for the novelty of the thing He would reply to the critics that a redistribution of pain and pleasure was better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures The sum total of good and evil in the world remained ever the same [27] So the Swami s mission was for the destitute the poor and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes and if after everything had been done for them first and there was spare time then only for the gentry Those peasants and labouring people were expected to be won over by love Afterwards it would be they who would collect small sums and start missions at their own villages and gradually from among those very men teachers would spring [28] He had some practical suggestions to make that some boys and girls of the peasant classes should be taught the rudiments of learning and a number of ideas should be infused into their brains Afterwards the peasants of each village would collect funds and would have one of these trained in their village [29] The Swami advocated that the orphan girls were to be protected first otherwise the Christian missionaries would take them away [30] The peasant and the labouring classes were in a moribund condition so he asked the moneyed people to help them regain their vitality and then leave them alone to follow their own path The peasants and labourers would look to their own problem grapple with and solve it But every care was to be taken the Swami cautioned to avoid any strife between the poor peasants the labouring people and the wealthy classes [31]

26 Ibid Vol VI p 345
27 Ibid pp [illegible] 344
28 Ibid p 3[illegible]
29 Ibid p 346
30 Ibid p 3[illegible]
31 Ibid p 3[illegible] [illegible] Vivekananda [illegible]
[illegible] Congress [illegible]

Vivekananda gave a clarion call to his countrymen, "Arise, awake, sleep no more, within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe this, and that power will be manifested." He wanted this message to be preached to all, and together with it the central truths of science, philosophy, history and geography to be spread among the masses in plain language[32] In order to give an institutional shape to his ideas, the society, known as Ram Krishna Mission, was formed in 1887 with Swami Vivekananda as the General President of the Mission.[33]

The Swami was confirmed in his conviction that nothing could be done to improve the state of things, unless there was spread of education first among the women and the masses. For this purpose, some Brahmacharies and Brahmacharinis were to be trained up. The former would ultimately take the vow of Sannyasa and try to carry the light of education among the masses from village to village, throughout the country, while the latter would do the same among women But everything was to be on the national line. Centres were to be started for teaching men and women. Brahmacharinis of education and character were to take up the task of teaching at the different centres History and the Puranas, housekeeping and the arts, the duties of home life, and principles that made for the development of an ideal character had to be taught with the help of modern science and the female students were to be trained up in ethical and spiritual life.[34] Only after the uplift of women and the awakening of the masses could any real good come about for the country[35]

Vivekananda was disillusioned with the schools and colleges which were producing a race of dyspeptics in India. He found the peasant, the shoe-maker, the sweeper and such other lower classes of India having much greater capacity for work and self-reliance than the so-called 'gentlemen' It was the lower classes who had been silently working through long ages, and producing

32 Ibid, p 409.
33. Ibid, p. 432.
34 Ibid, p 444.
35. Ibid, p. 445.

the entire wealth of the land without a word of complaint [36] But the Swami through his prophetic vision foresaw that the coming years belonged to the toilers—the lower classes were gradually awakening to the fact that they were being exploited and they were making a united front against their exploitation determined to exact their legitimate dues The masses of Europe and America had been the first to awaken and the fight had already begun there Signs of this awakening were visible in India also where a number of strikes among the lower classes had taken place However hard the upper classes might try it was impossible for them to crush the lower The well being of the upper classes therefore lay in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights The Swami was so much perturbed by the all round degradation of the Indian masses that he was constrained to say * Throw aside your scriptures in the Ganges and teach the people first the means of producing their food and clothing and then you will find time to read to them the scriptures If their material wants are not removed by the rousing of intense activity none will listen to words of spirituality '[38] Again Seeing the poor people of our country starving for food a desire comes to over throw all ceremonial worship and learning and go round from village to village collecting money from the rich by convincing them through force of character and *sadhana* and to spend the whole life in serving the poor [39] He exhorted the upper classes to make room for the lower classes and to let New India arise

36 Ibid Vol VII p 146
37 Ibid p 147
* This is reminiscent of Gandhi s rejoinder to Tagore the great poet When in October 1921 Tagore warned the nation against blind obedience to one man and against the craze for the spinning wheel Gandhi received the warning in good spirit but he submitted most humbly that to a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God would dare appear was work and promise of food as wages God created man to work for his food and those who ate without work were thieves It was hunger which was driving India to the spinning wheel and the call of the spinning wheel was the noblest of all (D G Tendulkar Mahatma Vol 2 pp 82 85)
38 Vivekananda *Works* Vol VII p 181
39 Ibid pp 243 44

from the massses—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler and the sweeper, from the grocer's 'shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-setter, from the factory, from marts, from markets, from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains [40]

How solicitous Vivekananda was for the welfare of the masses is only symptomatic of the spirit that had come over New India. Patriots and saints, social as well as political reformers, were applying themselves to the solution of the problems of the downtrodden. Most neglected of all were the Pariahs, who suffered from incredible discriminations. For example, about the end of the 19th century their children could not attend Government Schools freely, they were not allowed to use Dharmashalas or take water from cisterns built for the public, they were not admitted in the military service, as they used to be some years back, they were not admitted in service in other departments, they were not allowed to carry on different trades, they were not allowed to examine clothes and other articles they wished to purchase by touching them with their hands, creditors took undue advantage of them and refused to show them account and some times forged bonds against them, if any member of the low caste built a good house or wore good clothes, he was hated by the people, and they were allowed to cross in a boat any river or creek only after other people had crossed the same [41]

Like other social problems, this problem also attracted the attention of the National Social Conference and its ninth session passed a resolution that the education and social amelioration of the outcastes in all parts of India was a duty which devolved upon all those who had the permanent good of their country at heart, and every effort should be made to raise those classes to a position, where by education and industry they might rise above the disadvantages of their condition [42]

But piecemeal work had been done earlier by reformers who realised the importance of the betterment of the lot of the

40 Ibid, p 309
41 Report, 9th N S C, pp 54-55.
42 Ibid, p 54

backward people in the programme of nation building. The Maharashtra Village Education Society Baramati was an institution devoted to the enlightenment of the more unfortunate ones. The Wangi Village Education Society was formed in 1889 consisting of men of learning and eminence at Wangi. But it was later on transferred to Baramati and so came to be called Maharashtra Village Education Society Baramati. In 1896 there were 7 institutions under its control at different places in Poona district. Its special features were that students were not exposed to the temptations of a city life and education was imparted free to pupils belonging to low castes and backward classes.[43]

Sasipada Banerjea the pioneer in several spheres of social reform had done something for the welfare of the workers also. Among various institutions of reform conducted at Baranagore by Babu Sasipada Banerjea the Working Men's Club at Baranagore was one and was started by him on the 27th of August, 1870. It did an immense service to the labouring classes of the densely populated town of Baranagore. Total abstinence from the use of intoxicating drink was its chief feature and none of its members was addicted to the use of any intoxicants. It also discouraged superstitious and immoral rites and ceremonies and tried to elevate the moral tone of the masses. During the span of its existence it had produced many sober industrious and economic working men.[44] Excursion parties were formed now and then to give the working classes pure and healthy amusement free from every kind of immorality and during these excursions they were instructed as well as amused. At one time its working was so much interesting that the British Committee for the improvement of the labouring classes thought it worthwhile to bring it to the notice of Her Majesty the Queen.[45]

The 12th National Social Conference noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the Maharashtra Village Education Society at Baramati and by the Prarthana Samaj at Satara to educate the

43 Report 10th N.S.C. App. pp. 73-74.
44 Report 11th N.S.C. App. p. 71.
45 Ibid. App. p. 72.

low castes and to raise their status in Hindu society, and it recommended that every effort be made to raise these classes by education and industry so that they might attain a position which would remedy the disadvantages of their condition [46] In the year 1899, the Maharashtra Village Education Society, Baramati, had the following institutions under its auspices, putting its aims and objects in practice[47] :—

1 Baramati Boarding English School
2. Baramati Technical School.
3. Baramati Low Caste School.
4 Kalas Low Caste School.
5 Mekhali Low Caste School
6 Kazad Marathi School
7 Akola Low Caste School
8 Katphal Low Caste School
9. Society's Library

In 1900, two more institutions—Ruce Marathi School and Parevadi Marathi School—came to be added to the list of the institutions under the Society [48]

But these efforts, laudable in themselves, did not touch even the fringe of the colossal problem of the Pariahs They were poor, unhappy, despised social serfs The Christian missionaries were offering an inducement to them These unhappy people had no caste or social position to lose, no religious ideas to barter for others, no conception whatever of what Christianity really meant On the other hand, if they were converted to Christianity, they had the prospect of material profit-doles of food, pecuniary gain and the modification of the social disabilities. By the year 1900, 1/5 of them had been converted to Christianity, Of these 78 per cent native Christian men and 92 per cent women in Madras Presidency were in a state of absolute ignorance. Movement for their education started in 1894 when Olcott opened a school in 1894 for them very near the society's premises. A

46 Report, 12th N S C , App. p 84

47. Report, 13th N S C , App. p 46

48 Report, 14th N S C , App p 58

second one was opened in 1898 as a memorial to Mme H P Blavatsky a third was started in 1899 called after Damodar K Mavlankar and a fourth one called after that Pariah saint and scholar Tiruvalluvar came into existence In 1898 Miss S E Palmer an American became the General Secretary of Panchama Schools and under her able management the schools came to be run quite satisfactorily [49]

The National Social Conference constantly impressed upon its members the desirability and absolute necessity of improving the condition of outcastes and the orphans At its session in 1899 the National Social Conference regretted the caste disputes between the Shanars and the Marawars in South India and noted that in other provinces also the condition of the low castes in matters of education and social status was far from satisfactory and recommended to the Social Reform Associations to interest themselves in the salvation of the low castes by educating them and raising their status [49a] The efforts of the Lahore Arya Samaj were praiseworthy in the elevation of the Pariahs By 1899 there were only a few for the education of the low castes *e g* institutions under Baramati in the Bombay Presidency a school for the Panchamas at Mangalore [49b] and the schools started by the Theosophists The Palampur School and Literary Association had under it a Borah School and the Mangalore Social Reform Association had under it a school for Panchamas which it had started mainly through the support and encouragement of a few European gentlemen [49c] In 1900 the Conference laid down that the education and social amelioration of the low castes in all parts of India was a duty which rested on all those who had the

49 Report 17th N S C pp 166 168 Mrs Besant says that the Christian missionaries helped the depressed classes but only to abuse Hinduism The Theosophists were th first to edu ate them on national lines schools for the d press d Pariahs wer founded round the theosoph cal Headquarters at Adyar by Col O' ott The Theosophists laboured there to make that edu ation a su cess Besant Annie—*The B rth of New India* p 359)

49a I S R Vol X p 158

49b Ibid p 174

49c I S R Vol XI p 162

her evidence she had five such girls in her possession

The Society rendered useful service to the needy and came to the succour of the neglected the deserted and the fallen To take only a few examples —A girl aged nine years was adopted by a couple in Calcutta who soon got tired of their bargain They endeavoured to get rid of her but failing ill treated her The Society for the Protection of Children in India took her and placed her in a home until she was sent to Kalimpong An orphan girl aged 12 years was found in the possession of a Mohammedan women in a Kintal The Society got her and after maintaining her for several months placed her in St Mary s Home A female child was deserted by her mother She was looked after by the Hospital Authorities for months when she was handed over to the Secretary of the Society for the protection of children in India who placed her in the Foundling Asylum Certain women were saved from evil surroundings also A woman living an evil life had a daughter aged 13 years She gave the child to a lady to send her to school Repenting almost immediately she demanded her child back The said lady sought the help of Society, which undertook the case Legal advice was given and the necessary evidence to resist the mother s claim on the ground of her character was gathered by an Officer of the Society Eventually the girl was handed over to a Christian Institution and so delivered from the destructive influence of her mother s life Investigation also showed that there were regular depots in large cities to which young girls were brought from the country for sale The Secretary of the Society applied himself to this problem also *

* In May 1908 Madras also decided to have a Society for the protection of children on the lines of the Societies at Calcutta and Bombay Among the supporters of the movement were Hon ble Mr P S Sivaswami Iyer the Hon ble Nawab Syed Mohammed Saheb and Dewan Bahadur N Subrahmanyam representing the Hindu Mohammedan and Indian Christian Communities respectively Cruelty to children was of two kinds—(a) physical ill treatment and neglect (b) or their demoralisation In the latter case the children belonged to any of the following categories children dedicated to the gods—this practice was believed to be very widespread in South India children chiefly of the lower classes left

The National Social Conference (Ahmedabad, 1902) was highly distressed with the disastrous effects on Society of the neglect and indifference to the moral and material advancement of the low castes and recorded its earnest conviction that the prosperity and progress of the country was deeply involved in effective measures being taken towards the amelioration of their condition.[52] The Bombay Provincial Conference (Dharwar, 1903) also held that the existing degraded condition of the lower castes was, in itself and from the national point of view, unsatisfactory, and was of opinion that every well-wisher of the country should consider it his duty to do all he could to raise their moral and social condition by trying to rouse self-respect in these classes and placing facilities for education and employment within their reach [53] The National Social Conference, Madras, 1903, reiterated the disastrous effects to society of the neglect of and indifference to the moral and material advancement of the low castes [54]

A glimpse of the discrimination from which the depressed classes were suffering can be had from what a correspondent wrote to the *Times of India* on the 5th June, 1904 The Mahar Community of the Deccan and other parts of the President on that day sent in a petition to His Excellency Lord Lamington praying Government to give them a helping hand in raising the status of their community The petition bore the name of 1588 signatories, and it pointed out the condition under which the Mahars existed at that time According to the Proclamation of 1858, they had been given the liberty to join the different services, and in times when the British Raj had been pressed hard, as during the Mutiny, the Mahars had joined the army, and in other ways had shown themselves worthy of the confidence of Government Now that the army had been barred to them, they had been reduced to the condition of menials, they had been consi-

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unprotected by the death of their natural guardians, including orphans found in hospitals, illegitimate children of good caste (I S R. Vol. XVIII, p 421)

52 I S R , Vol XIII, p 169

53 I S R , Vol XIII, p 350

54 I S R , Vol XIV, p. 232

dered outcaste people and the commonest rights had been denied to them Their touch nay even shadow was deemed pollution and in some villages the Mahars had been prohibited from speaking on certain days in the week The petitioners instanced a case in which a Brahman magistrate convicted and fined a Mahar for corrupting a public spring Mr Lamb the District Magistrate of Ahmadnagar referred the matter to the High Court on the ground that by touching the spring the accused had not fouled the water in the sense understood by Section 277 of the Indian Penal Code and the Hon'ble Justice Crowe and Batty had upheld this view and quashed the conviction The Petitioners had further prayed that formerly under the Mohammedan Government the Mahars were given small pieces of land which were called Maharka even to the present day The petitioners did not wish that Government should make those who called themselves high caste Hindus abide by their opinion but they asked that similar liberty be given to Mahars in public appointments They therefore asked that as loyal subjects of the British Government various employments at the disposal of the British Government might be opened to them that Government should see that their children enjoyed the same facilities for education as those of other castes had that their men be allowed to join the native militia and native police departments on the same term as other castes or if Government did not wish to enlist Mahar soldier in the same regiments as other castes that they form separate regiments of Mahar soldiers the same as those of the Mujbigs in the Punjab The petitioners continued that the bands of native regiments were largely recruited by the Rajputana and Mers in the Punjab The petitioners continued Mahar musicians but promotion was barred to them because of their caste They asked for the removal of these obstacles and in conclusion they asked Government to grant their prayer and to give them some chance in the battle of life which their own countrymen denied them by restoring to them the privilege of entering the Army and allowing them the privileges then reserved for other castes The petition bore signatures from Poona Kolaba Ratnagiri Satara Ahmadnagar Sholapur Bhore

Balughat, Phultan, Baramati, Dhond, Pundhurpur, Mhow, Sirur, Nasik,Bombay, Aurangabad, Indore, Malwa, Hyderabad(Deccan), Khandesh, Miraj, Junnar, and other districts in the Presidency [55]

There were several factors which were working for the emancipation of the low castes *The Indian Social Reformer* wrote about them on July 17,1904, "Orthodox Hinduism hardly seems to realise that it is sitting on a volcano But so it is The problem of the low castes is becoming daily insistent. Hindu society, and for that matter, any community in India is largely dependent on these castes for the economy of much of its daily life. For long these castes have been kept in ignorance and subjection so that they hardly knew that they were fit for anything else than to slave for their masters But times are changing The Christian missionary, the emigration agent and, to some extent, the recruiting officer have taught them to look forward to better things The Christian convert, the pensioned sepoy, and the emigrant, who has returned with his savings from Mauritius, or Penang or Natal, do not recognise the authority of the high casteman Everyone of such men is, moreover, an example and an influence for their home-staying brethren in their villages European officers have also done something to help the revolt of the lower castes by employing them for service which neither Hindu nor Mohammedan would think of employing them forn "[56]

These factors notwithstanding, orthodoxy died hard. Teachers in schools would not receive the tasks done by low caste students personally The pupil would throw the slate at the feet of the teacher from a distance While inspecting a school, A. Subha Rao himself was the witness of such a scene.[57]*

56 Ibid , p 554

57 Ibid , p 554

* In July, 1904, Travancore resolved to give education free to the backward classes (I S R , Vol XIV, p 565) How far things had gone is evident from the fact that even a man of the attainments of Dr B R Ambedkar had to suffer on account of his caste When he came back as a barrister after studies in the U S A , Germany and Britain, he got a job as a clerk But immediately he was boycotted

Besides the difficulty the low caste men faced in receiving their education they had greater difficulties in store for them in matters of appointment Education was of little avail Even British officers would not incur the displeasure of their subordinates by appointing members of the depressed classes For example once a kindly judge ordered for the appointment of a member of the depressed classes as a peon and such a hue and cry was raised by other peons of the locality that the appointment had to be dropped The Christian missionaries had done a lot to ameliorate the condition of these people Many had been converted and enjoyed the benefits of education and civilisation But the Christian missionaries were under the inevitable disadvantage of being foreign and even the depressed people lowest as they were in the scale of Hindu society, showed a remarkable reluctance to accept the betterment at this cost unless under a dire stress of material want The State also afforded special encouragement for the education of the depressed classes But the educational system whether under the control of the Government or of the Municipalities was after all an inadequate means for the actual elevation of these people inasmuch as such a system was in its very nature bound to be purely mechanical and impersonal So what was wanted was not merely a machinery of education however grand but a real mission i e an organisation in which the personal element presided over and energised the mechanism and secondly a mission which was not exotic but indigenous or in other words a mission which was bent upon working an evolution and not a revolution as Christian missions were in the religion tradition and social life of those people The Olcott Panchama Free Schools in Madras already referred to* were the institutions best suited to their needs Likewise in Bombay much could be done for the Mahars The Prarthna Samaj had already night

by all the other clerks He roamed around Western India doing a variety of jobs all of which ended (sometimes abruptly with a beating) when it was discovered that he was an untouchable (Leonard Mosley *The Last Days of the British Raj* p 59)

* Vide Supra p 263

schools for those people. But much was still to be done [58]

It was to fulfil this purpose that Mr. Shinde proposed in October, 1906, that a vigorous and indigenous effort must be made for the elevation of this large mass of humanity; that the problem of the elevation of these classes called for a special solution beyond that of their education in the ordinary sense, that a new and indigenous mission alone was likely to effect a nucleus for this special solution rather than any mechanical agency such as that of the Government or Municipal educational system or even the foreign Christian missions, and that the city of Bombay was a proper place to make a beginning

It was proposed that the following institutions should be opened (*i*) Free Day Schools for both boys and girls teaching up to the Marathi 5th and the English 3rd standard. (*ii*) Night School for the working people (*iii*) Charitable medical Dispensary (*iv*) Reading Room and Library. (*v*) Young Men's Gymkhana (*vi*) Mother's Sewing Cloth Centre (*vii*) Prayer and Lecture Hall.[59]

All these institutions were to be located and conducted in a suitable building carefully selected in a district of the city of Bombay which might be mostly inhabited by the Depressed Communities The Resident Missionary Teachers were to be provided quarters in that building. They were to generally spend three hours in teaching in the day school and one hour in the night school, two hours in visiting the homes of those people by day and one hour by night There were to be five hours of tuition in the day school (10 a m. to 4 p m) and two hours in the night school (7 a m. to 9 p m.) There was to be a dispensary for the needy. The following steps were to be taken for the education of the depressed classes:—

(i) A Model Middle School for Boys
(ii) A Model Middle School for Girls
(iii) An Industrial School and Workshop.
(iv) A Boarding House with free board for only such of

58 I S R , Vol. XVI, pp 569-571
59 I.S.R , Vol XVII, p 166

the depressed class boys and girls from the *mufussil* as were poor and promising

(v) A system of scholarship examinations for the encouragement of pupils of those communities in the important Municipal Schools all over Maharashtra.[60]

But little seems to have been done by the Mission in 1906 for the Report of the National Social Conference for the year 1907 was that till the establishment of the *Nirashrit Seva Sadan* in May 1907 the work conducted by the Mission was the Day School at Parel and two Night Schools with a small number of boys and girls and a free dispensary.[61]

Two youngmen and two young women of missionary zeal were available and with their help the institution called the Nirashrit Seva Sadan was started on 22nd May 1907. Its objects were to train such of the high caste people as might be found disposed to devote themselves to some useful and charitable work, specially unmarried young ladies and homeless widows and to maintain and provide work for such devoted people after their being trained in the Sadan in connection with the Depressed Classes Mission and similar benevolent activities for the poor and neglected people. Day and Night Schools were to be maintained by the Seva Sadan Missionaries. A special night class was to be started for grown up girls who during the day time worked in mills. A Sunday class was taken every Sunday morning when moral and religious instruction was given in the form of stories. In the sewing class sewing and embroidery works were taught. Religious instruction was also imparted. Everyday early in the morning Bhajan was sung and once a week divine service was offered in the Sadan. Meetings were held on Saturdays when lectures on moral and social subjects were delivered. Kirtans were performed and readings were given from the works of the Saints. On holidays

60 Ibid pp 116 117

61 Report 21st N S C p 86

special meetings of women were also held[62]

For the elevation of the lower classes and Pariahs the Prarthana Samaj, Poona, conducted two Night Schools in the city of Poona, one containing boys of various castes and the other of low castes—Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars, Holars etc Moral and religious instruction was also imparted in these schools and temperance preached with some success[63]

Meanwhile social reform bodies all over the country were becoming everyday more and more aware of this very important aspect of national reconstruction Thus the Central Provinces Social Conference (1907) emphasized the elevation of the condition of the low castes and backward communities and the reclamation of such outcastes as sincerely repented and wished to return to their old faith[64]

The Depressed Classes Mission, started under the auspices of the Prarthana Samaj by Mr. Shinde, evoked a good deal of interest throughout the country It had done good work, but not solved the problem. Mr. Shinde and his coadjutors, however, planned out and opened work in several directions Shinde's sister also worked with zeal and ran a school for girls at Parel Another worker was Sayad Kadir who gave up Government service to serve the country.[65]

The Namasudras of East Bengal were occupying the lowest position in the Hindu Social economy of the Province But potentially they were not deficient. They were lacking neither physical stamina, nor intellectual capacity, nor commercial or rather agricultural enterprise, nor communal unity, nor moral strength So the intolerable condition under which they were working could not be expected to last long.[66]

In May, 1908, on the line of Shinde's Mission, Mr K.

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62 Report, 21st N S C , p. 87.

* The Nirashrit Seva Sadan was situated at Fergusson Road Parel, and its Secretary was Sayad Abdul Kadir.

63 Ibid , p. 97

64. I.S R , Vol XVII, p 428

65 Ibid , pp 541-542

66 *New India*, Aug 1907, Quoted in I S R , Vol. XVII, p 620.

Ranga Rao of Mangalore also started a Mission for the uplift of the depressed classes[67] In May, 1909 a Free Institution for the depressed classes was started in Madras The working hours were from 6 to 8 in the morning and 6 to 9 in the evening There were 42 boys and 17 girls of whom 25 were Panchama boys and 12 Panchama girls The staff consisted of 4 members of the Order of Sons of India and several others pledged to work for the school without remuneration[68] In October 1909 letters were sent by the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association to various districts of the Presidency proper for holding meetings simultaneously on the 17th October 1909 on behalf of the depressed classes Meetings were held at many places—such as Dhulia (Khandesh) Ratnagiri Bijapur Poona Godag (Dharwar District) Thana etc[69] It was emphasised that the object of the Depressed Classes Mission was to elevate the social as well as spiritual condition of the depressed classes *viz*, the Mahars Chamars Pariah Namasudras and all such other neglected classes in India by means of promoting education providing work remedying their social disabilities and preaching to them the ideas of Liberal Religion personal character and good citizenship[70]

By November 1909 the following institutions were catering to the educational needs of the low castes in Bombay —(1) The Parel Middle School (2) Deonar Primary School (3) Madanpura Primary School, and (4) Kamathipura Gujarati School for *Bhangis* Sunday Schools were there in which selections from Ramdas the Ramayan Theistic hymns from the Vedas and of the Maratha saints and short moral stories were taught to the boys and girls every Sunday morning There were also Sunday Schools for grown ups Lectures and also conversation among the people themselves served useful purposes Thus there was co operative labour work under the management of Mr Shashi bhushan Rath an expert in tanning and he was helped by a

67 I.S.R Vol XVIII p 42
68 I.S.R. Vol XIX p 441
69 I.S.R Vol XX p 103
70 Ibid. p 112

German expert in the improved method of boot-making This was a new enterprise to provide work on the principle of co-operative production. As regards the Nirashrit Sadan, two youngmen and three ladies were solely devoted to the work of the Mission. The ladies visited the poor in their homes, nursing the sick, rescuing the helpless and organising sewing circles and women's meetings. The men managed the Mission Centres. The *Purity Servant* was an English monthly organ of the Mission The Mission had branches at Poona, Manmad, Igatpuri, Indore, Akola, Amraoti, Dapoli, Mangalore and Madras. The New branches were at Mahabaleshwar and Nasik.[71]

The greatest service, however, to the cause of the depressed classes was rendered by the Arya Samaj The Arya Samajists reclaimed them by admitting them to the privileges of the *Dwijas*.* They administered *Gayatri*** to a select number, invested them with the sacred thread, conferred on them the privileges of performing *Homa*,* and started interdining and in a few cases even intermarriage with them In Jammu-Kashmir the whole strength of one of these castes in one pargana, about 10,000 souls, was admitted into the Arya Samaj.** In Sialkote 36,000 of another caste were similarly raised. There was a special organisation for

71. Ibid , pp 112-113

* The *Dwijas* or the 'twice-born' were entitled to *upanayan* ceremony from which the *Shudras* were excluded according to orthodox Hinduism

** *Gayatri* was the prayer which every *Dwija* was expected to offer

* *Homa* is the performance of sacrifice by putting *ghee*, sandal wood, and other things into fire

** Lala Lajpat Rai claims "In the Punjab and the United Provinces its work, in extent and volume, is second to no other agency except the Government Christian missions maintain a large number of schools of all kinds, but no single mission can claim to have as many schools for boys and girls as the Arya Samaj (Rai, Lala Lajpat, *The Arya Samaj*, p. 179) He further claims that outside Christian circles the Arya Samaj was the first purely Indian Association to organise orphanages and Widow Homes. The first Hindu Orphanage was established at Ferozepur. It maintained schools and workshop for the training of boys and girls A number of other orphanages in North India on similar lines, controlled and managed by the Arya Samaj, were started (Ibid., p. 211)

their education—the Megh Udhar Sabha (a society for the uplift of Meghas)[71a] It maintained a Central School and several primary Schools In Gurudaspur Pandit Ram Bhaj Dutta reclaimed several thousands of these people In Lahore good work was done among Hindu Sweepers and Chamars Land was also purchased there (at Lahore) to build a Central Home and a Central School for the D pressed Classes Mission Some primary schools scattered all over the province were started for the benefit of these classes In every district of the Punjab the Arya Samajists did some thing for the uplift of the depressed classes In some places even the orthodox party became conscious of their duties towards the depressed classes and were in sympathy with the Arya Samaj At the Punjab Hindu Conference at the suggestion of an Ortho dox Hindu Sadhu a resolution was unanimously passed to invite the depressed classes to send representatives to the Conference in future In Lahore and some other places even high caste Hindus sent their children to schools maintained mainly for the depressed classes In the U P also a large number of Domes (one of the most despised castes among the depressed classes) were reclaimed to the Arya Samaj The Arya Samajists also maintained schools for Chamar boys [72]

The scope of the work of the Arya Samaj was no doubt wider than that of any other organisation but all social reform associations were conscious of the importance of the elevation of the depressed classes and were realising the harm that was being done to the solidarity of Hindu Society on that account For example the Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1912 resolved that for the attainment of the ideal of unifying all Hindus into one homogeneous community Government be requested by special legislation to place beyond doubt the validity of marriages between Hindus belonging to different castes and

71a As far back as 1890 the Meghas led by Bhagat Badhava Ram applied to the Sialkote Arya Samaj to be reclaimed and raised in social status The treatment meted out to them was as bad as that meted out to the Pariahs in the South They were reclaimed (Report of the 27th N S C pp 61 65)

72 Rai Lala Lajpat *The Arya Samaj* pp 230 232

sub-castes [73]

Travancore, which possessed a large proportion of the depressed classes than almost any other part of the country, was also forging ahead in ameliorating the depressed classes The treatment accorded to them was harsher than in other parts of India. The Travancore Government asserted their (of the depressed classes) rights to attend schools maintained by the Government According to the *United India* of Madras the Nairs of Neyyatankara set themselves in opposition to the admission of the Pulaya boys to the Government School on the ground that they were untouchables. They even forcibly prevented the entrance of those boys into the school.* The Government had to resort to force to protect the children [74]

The Bengal Depressed Classes Mission, formed in 1908, was mainly engaged in educational work among the backward classes of Bengal, especially the Namasudras of Jessore and Khulna [75] The work carried on all over the country for the uplift of the low castes was so heartening that the *Indian Social Reformer* could remark on 15 9 1912 that the widespread activities on behalf of the depressed classes were among the most cheering signs of the times. In Bombay, Poona, Madras, Mangalore, Dacca, and even in Upper Burma, earnest men were engaged in raising the condition of these classes. Good work was being done in those places. The success of the Sudh Sabha in the Punjab under the leadership of Pandit Rambhaj Datta Choudhary was remarkable.[76]

The Conference of the Depressed Classes Mission, Maharashtra, was held in Fergusson College, Poona, under Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar on the5th and 6th October, 1912. Its objects were to provoke deliberate thought upon practical topics regarding the elevation of the depressed classes in Maharashtra among their sympathisers, to secure co-operation of other educa-

73 Report, Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1912, p 33

* Compare the Negro Problem in the U S A

74 I S R , Vol XXII, p 277

75 Ibid , p 596

76 I S R , Vol XXIII, p 25

tional and philanthropic bodies with that Mission and to create sympathies among the masses at large with the work of that Mission by open and systematic discussion The subjects discussed at the Conference were —the necessity of a Free Boarding House in connection with the Society s School in Poona Camp the urgency of more missionaries and funds for these purposes the outlines of the literary and industrial education of the depressed classes the co operation of the Municipalities and other educational and philanthropic bodies, the co operation of the Education Department and prominent institutions of the Government with the Mission in its educational activities the co operation of the liberal members of the principal religious denominations with the Mission in its social and spiritual work special needs and grievances of the depressed classes to be dwelt upon by the prominent members of those classes themselves [77]

On 7 10 1912 a women s meeting was also held in connection with the Depressed Classes Mission Maharashtra Conference It was attended by about two hundred ladies of the depressed classes and about fifty of the higher classes among whom were Mrs Kashibai Kanitkar Mrs Lakshmibai Ranade Mrs Sitabai Bhandarkar etc Mrs Ramabai Ranade presided over the meeting and she exhorted the women of the depressed classes to avail themselves of the advantage offered to them by the lady workers

given them as might induce them to continue in the fold and not to go outside it The Bharat Dharma Mahamandal was not prepared at once to raise them to high social position, such as those of the higher castes, but they might be placed in such a position as would make them believe that when they were well educated and impressed with the principles of morality, and of the Hindu Shastras, they would have good position in the hiearchy of castes. This was a remarkable statement from a body said to be the exponent of orthodox religion [79]

Meanwhile the Panchamas were gradually making progress in the field of education, and new institutions were coming into existence promoting the cause of their education Thus the Panchama Educational Association, Maymyo, came into existence on 1.9 1912.[80]

The Bombay branch of the Depressed Classes Mission Society continued to do excellant work in all its 5 branches at that time—Bombay, Poona the Karnatak branch of Hubli, Mangalore, Bhavnagar and the Central Provinces Other centres where some work was being done were Amraoti, Akola, Dapoli, Malwan, Satara, Thana, Matheran, Rajkot and Yeotmal. Also there were agencies working for the amelioration of the depressed classes in Madras and East Bengal. But they were not included in the list probably because they were not affiliated to the Mission [81]

As to the valuable work done by the Mission, the *Indian Social Reformer* remarked in January, 1914, that the striking testimony to the beneficial results of the work of the Depressed Classes Mission Society was borne by the high percentage of literates among the members of the Meghwal Co-operative Credit Society in Bombay The proportion was about 50% while in a similar society of mill-hands it was not more than 10%. According to the authorities the high ratio of literacy among the Meghwals was due to the pioneer work done by the Depressed

79 Ibid, p 85
80 Ibid, p. 116
81 Ibid, p. 469

Classes Mission Society.[82]

By the end of 1914 the Mission widened into the Depressed Classes Mission of India with Headquarters at Bombay and Mr Shinde as General Secretary. It had institutions affiliated to it not only in Bombay Presidency but in Madras and in Central Provinces and Berar. The Bengal and Assam Depressed Classes Mission was an independent body carrying on its work there. Later it got itself amalgamated with the Sadhanashrama Seva Section of the Brahmo Sadhanashrama in Calcutta. The amalgamated body came to be known as the Backward Classes Mission.[83]

By July 1916 the progress made by the Depressed Classes Mission Society India was so considerable that we find in its Ninth Annual Report the following hopeful note — "It has been the experience of its several workers that even that section of the uneducated orthodoxy which has yet totally failed to appreciate the benevolent aims of this Mission does not now a days trouble itself to give any appreciable utterance to its antagonism in respect of the actual work in the field while the other section which has already perceived the good results of this work but for some reason or other cannot yet reconcile itself to the Mission to the extent of active co operation is observing an attitude of expectant watchfulness. Thus the orthodoxy as a whole may be taken to be with the Mission inasmuch as it is not against it.

As to the educated class they may be safely considered to be with us in a more real sense though with a few exception which only go to prove the rule. The educated classes naturally are therefore the only people that are in a position to realise the problem and are slowly coming forward to the practical aid of the Mission."[84]

Other Reform Associations also were impressing upon their members the urgency of raising the status of the depressed

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82 I.S.R. Vol XXIV p. 41

83 I.S.R. Vol XXV p. 334

84 I.S.R. Vol XXVII p. 90

classes Thus Mrs Besant moved at the Madras Provincial Social Conference, 1918, that while noting with satisfaction the efforts made in the direction of elevating the depressed classes in several parts of the country, the Conference urged the need of more active widespread efforts by affording greater facilities for the education of those classes, and by creating a public feeling against the gross and unfair notion of regarding them as 'Untouchables' and by making earnest attempts to better position in society.[85]

More striking was the fact that the Indian National Congress, which had in its early years refrained from taking up questions of social reform, had come round to the view that social reforms were to be attended to At the XXXII session of the Indian National Congress (Calcutta-1917), Mr G A Natesan moved the resolution on the depressed classes; "This Conference urges upon the people of India the necessity, justice and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes, the disabilities being of a most vexatious and oppressive character, subjecting those classes to consideration hardship and inconvenience."[86] The words in which Mr. B J Desai supported the resolution suggested that the national emancipation of India depended upon social justice done to the downtrodden and the lowly He said, "I say that it is only social justice that will win for us the Self-Government that we are seeking."[87]

It was still more heartening that signs of ferment were visible among the depressed classes themselves As early as 1912, a Depressed Classes Association under the designation of the Keraleeya Kammalla Samajam was organised in Calicutt with branches all over Malabar. It was made up entirely of the goldsmith, blacksmith, carpenter, washermad, and barber castes, the main object being to ameliorate the social, moral and economic condition of their fellowmen, and to adapt themselves as far

85 Report, Madras, Provincial Social Conference, 1918, p. 34
86 Report, XXXII Session of the I N.C , pp 128-129
87. Ibid , p 130

as possible to agriculture [87a] The Tiyas of Malabar had produced a leader from among themselves named Swami Sahajananda He was very young—only 27 years old and engaged himself in social work for the uplifting of his own people [88] In January 1918 the *Indian Social Reformer* reported the revolt of the untouchables The Elavas and Cherumas made appeal to L A Subharama Iyer President of the Home Rule League in Palaghat against the disabilities imposed on them He promised support A large meeting was held and resolved to take a long procession of those people along the forbidden road The procession, carrying the portrait of the King Emperor and Union Jack organised and accompanied by the members of the League and protected by the police proved a great success This caused resentment among the non Brahmins [89] In the third week of March 1918 the Anti untouchability Conference for removing the stigma of untouchability from certain classes was held [90]

87a I.S R Vol XXII p 1 0
88 I S R Vol XXIII p 386
89 I S R XXVIII p 266
90 Ibid. p 261

TEN

Change in Social Outlook

From the very beginning patriots of all schools realised that no real national progress was possible without a radical change in social outlook As noted earlier,[1] the evil of drink had taken firm root in India both among the upper and the lower classes. Early in 1891, M K Gandhi wrote " . one of the most greatly-felt evils of the British Rule is the importation of alcohol—that enemy of mankind, that curse of civilization—in some form or another "[2] Mr Gandhi was shocked to find that inspite of both Hindu and Mohammedan religious injunctions against it, the evil had spread through the length and breadth of India Instead of stopping it, the Government, he asserted, was aiding and abetting the spread of alcohol The poor, he went on, were the greatest sufferers, and thev spent what little they earned in buying alcohol instead of buying good food and other necessaries [3] Social conscience was to be roused against this great evil

A change in social outlook was also required with reference to the existence of nautch girls, bias against foreign travel, the

1 Vide p 16-17 Supra

2 *The Vegetarian*, 21 2.1891, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol I, p 29

Keshab Chandra Sen had earlier said as much when he complained that the British Government had brought Shakespeare and Milton to India, but also brandy bottles (quoted by Kumar M.N. Choudhury. Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol. I, p 51)

3. *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol I, p 29

institution of caste the primitive and conservative mode of mourning by women the obscenity at the festivals like the Holi, the improvement in the physique of boys and girls and the need of religious education An important feature of Indian social life was its rigidity which was incompatible with the establishment of a free industrial flexible modern society Especially conservative in this respect was the Hindu society which would not take back into its fold those of its members who had been converted to some other sect on flimsy grounds and who wanted to come back to their old fold This conservatism was doing incalculable harm to the Hindus and thinning their rank How fast the Hindus were declining is to be inferred from the fact that according to the census of 1901 the Brahmans decreased by 40 per 10 000 whereas followers of Islam increased by 7 6 p c and Christian by 27⅓ p c[4] The reason was well explained by Dewan Bahadur Shrinivas Raghava Iyengar when he said As soon as the person of the lowest class of the Hindu population is converted either to the Christian or Mohammedan religion he emerges at a bound from his position of social degradation and is acknowledged by persons belonging to the higher classes to have done so and he often turns the table against the latter by calling them *Kaffirs* or heathens it is also noteworthy to what extent the social stigma of degradation stimulates the industrial activities of the classes who have been relieved of it The Moplahs of Malabar for instance are far more active and enterprising and well to do than the classes of the Hindus from whom they have seceded [4a] The Arya Samaj was largely instrumental in removing this blot on the Hindu society For example the Arya Samaj of Gujranwala openly took back into the Arya Dharma a Mohammedan by birth The Sanatan Dharma Sabha of Jallundur purified on the 20th of February (1904) a *Khatri* who had turned a Mohammedan[5]

The Census Commissioner of U P 1911 noted Special

4 Chandavarkar N G *Speeches* p 125
4a Quoted Ibid
5 Ibid

efforts are directed to the reconversion of converts from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam, while persons who are Christian or Mohammedan by birth are also occasionally converted "[6] The *Rajput Shuddhi Sabha*, affiliated to the Samaj converted Mohammedan Rajputs to Hinduism *via* the Arya Samaj. On a single day, 370 such Rajputs were converted to Aranism In three years between 1907 and 1910, this Society claimed to have converted 1052 Musalman Rajputs [7]

The social evil which was even more ruinous to society--morally, socially and economically—was the existence of the nautch girls They had become a public nuisance They were required to dance on all festive occasions and little knowing about its significance even European officers allowed themselves to be amused by these dancing girls The Madras Social Reform Association applied itself seriously to this problem, and one of its exciting victories, early in its life, was the compaign it carried successfully in awakening the conscience of the public to the enormities of the system of nautch as it then existed The handful of reformers who headed the agitation were the target of abuses and ridicule Strange arguments were advanced against them They were charged with attempting to kill the fine arts of music and dancing and being too impotent to appreciate feminine charms associated with a free life of untrammelled licence Even the most educated and highly placed men shrugged their shoulders at the reformers' unpatriotic diversion of public movements to so sordid a matter and their (the reformers') attention was called to the Divorce Courts of Europe and to their theatre and dancing saloons.[8] "Leaders of reactionary Indian thought in a truly saintly spirit and with that spark of divine compassion which pities the follies of erring humanity, informed us that there should be a recognised outlet for human passions and that otherwise family life in the Hindu social strata would

6 Census Commissioner of U P , 1911, quoted in Lajpat Rai s *The Arya Samaj*, p 221

7. Rai, Lala Lajpat, *The Arya Samaj*, p 221 (taken from *Census Report*, 1911)

8 Rao , K. Subha, op. cit , p 228,

be placed amidst unthinkable and unutterable dangers remarks K Subha Rao [9]

Opposition to the reformers was so strong that no Indian of position and status not identified with the Association could be found in all Madras to preside over the public meeting pro posed to be held by the reformers to start the agitation At last Dr Miller Principal of the Christian College presided over the public meeting [10] But in spite of the vehement opposition of the reactionaries the movement made satisfactory progress

How even responsible persons indulged in irresponsible talks can be inferred from an incident narrated by K Subha Rao Once three high officials of the Mysore Government say X Y Z were having a conversation among themselves They condemned the anti nautch movement as the most insane of all the mad agitations of the Madras Social Reform Association because the reformers were agitating against the divine arts of singing and dancing They were fools who failed to realise the spiritual artistic and social needs of the Indian people or knaves who assumed a cloak of false piety merely for the sake of notoriety and covered all their sins in secret in such public manifestations of pretended horror against nautch girls In course of the conversation Mr Z lamented that the agitation started in Madras had spread to peaceful Mysore that people who never celebrated a domestic festivity without singing and dancing were now mortally afraid of inviting a dancing girl to their house for fear of being publicly held to ridicule by the Madras and the Mysore Press [11] K Subha Rao was following them and Mr X demanded of him either to convince them of the desirability of the reform or to express penitence on his (Subha Rao s) own behalf and on behalf of his Madras friends [12] K Subha Rao replied that there was nothing wrong with music and dancing as such but what was objected to by the reformers

9 Ibid pp 228 229
10 Ibid p 229
11 Ibid pp 230 231
12 Ibid p 231

was the availability of the dancing girl for filthy lucre which vitiated the whole nautch movement If there was nothing wrong with the dancing girls, Mr. Rao hit back, the supporters of the system should advise their wives and daughters to imitate the fashions of the dancing girl. People keeping women folk in strict purdah, he advised, should not allow young ladies to dance before them The vices of the West were not to be imitated. Mr. Rao countered the argument that the nautch girl was the safety-valve of social morality by saying that the safety valve had cost much and proved the ruin of so many families[13]

Prejudice against crossing the black waters was still strong. A few examples would be enough to demonstrate the seriousness of the problem. When in 1888 M.K. Gandhi decided to go to England, he faced stiff opposition from his castemen. But he showed his determination to go abroad, and he was declared an outcaste by the Sheth—the head of his community.[14] Motilal Nehru had to face a similar situation when he paid a visit to Europe about 1899-1900 Before him Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, also a Kashmiri Pandit, had been to England and this had raised a storm among the Kashmiri Brahmans The orthodox refused to have anything to do with him even after Pandit Dar had performed the *prayashchitta* ceremony (ceremony of purification). There were a few people who associated with Dar. Thus the Community was divided into two sections—the orthodox section and the reformist section. Thereafter many young Kashmiri Brahmans went to England, and when they came back, they joined the reformist section after a formal ceremony of purification. Having performed the formalities each person indulged in all manner of heterodox activities and mixed and fed with non-Brahmans and non-Hindus. But Motilal Nehru went a step further and refused to subject himself to any form of purification. Ultimately a considerable number of Kashmiris joined him and so a third group was formed.[15]

13. Ibid, pp 231-232
14 Gandhi, M K, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p 40
15. Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, p 13

Even a greater furore was aroused among the Kayasthas of Eastern U P and Western Bihar, who were a fairly enlightened community even in those days over the question of taking Mr Ganesh Prasad back into the community after his return in 1904 from a sojourn abroad Before him Mr (later Dr) Sachchidanand Sinha had gone abroad defying social restrictions and he had not been taken back into the caste But there was also a section of the community which was prepared to dine with Ganesh Prasad Rajendra Prasad and his brother joined in the dinner given by Ganesh Prasad Things came to such a pass that Mahamahopadhyaya Shiva Kumar Shastri of Benares was consulted over the propriety or otherwise of sojourn abroad He gave his opinion against travel overseas To settle the matter and to deal with the rebels a convention of the Kayasthas of Chapra was held at Chapra The convention broke up over the election of the President The reformists declared it to be their victory Siwan was with the reformists (Dr Rajendra Prasad belonged to Siwan) but Rajendra Prasad s cousins Jamuna Prasad and Gaya Prasad, who lived in Chapra and had participated in the dinner suffered They bore the brunt of social boycott At the students mess students would not eat or drink anything touched by them[16] These few examples only show how deep seated and all pervasive the evil was

Attempts had been made earlier to remove many of these evils and stout hearts had struggled valiantly for their eradication but no systematic and organised attempt had been made as yet Surendra Nath who had been disturbed[17] by the addiction of his countrymen both educated and illiterate to the use of intoxicants tried to cope with the evil as best he could

He organised meetings in the Hughli district to preach against the evils of drink Even the use of songs and *Kartals* was resorted to for more effective propaganda The meeting was organised by the poorest masses and great effect was

16 Prasad Dr Rajendra *Autobiography* pp 35 39
17 Vide p 17 Supra

produced.[18] An appeal was made to the Government to abolish the Outstill system[19] The appeal was successful, because it had the voice of the country behind it. It had also the support of the Temperance Association headed by W.S Caine. Government appointed Mr. Westmacott, the Magistrate of Howrah, to enquire into the Outstill system in the Hughli district, and as a result of the enquiry, the system was abolished[20]

Valuable in themselves, these piecemeal reforms were not to effect great changes. So a radical change in social outlook was not only desirable, but absolutely essential. But the Gordian knot was that social problem in India was weighed with issues of unusual difficulty and complexity. No social question affecting the Hindu community was not bound up with religious considerations, and when divine sanction, in whatever form, was invoked in aid of a social institution, it sat enthroned in the popular heart with added firmness and fixity, with its roots in sentiment rather than in reason.[21] The change might be effected through the education of public opinion. The National Social Conference, the Provincial Reform Associations, the Caste Conference and the local reform bodies, formed with a view to the removal of particularly local evils, applied themselves to this very task

As early as 1885 a society called the '*Band of Hope, Baluchistan*' was established at Quetta under the inspiration of Rama Rakha Mull of the Postal Department, with Malik Narayan Das as its Secretary, for the eradication of the evil of drink in Quetta where wine was in free use. Mr. Jamiat Rai read a paper on the 'evils of drink' and 500 copies of the same were prepared to be distributed not only in Baluchistan, but in several important centres of upper India Mr Ram Rakha Mull also got 700 copies of the same paper distributed on his own account. Another paper was also subsequently published by the Band of Hope Mr Bacha Ram Chatterjee delivered a series

18 Banerjea, S N , op cit , p 94
19 Vide p 17 Supra
20. Banerjea, S N , op cit., p 96
21 Ibid , p 396

of lectures on the evils of strong drinks The meetings were attended by the European members of the Army Temperance Association who offered to render every help in their power [22]

At its very second session (Allahabad, 1888) the National Social Conference by its fifth resolution among other things advocated the removal of social disabilities attending sea voyages to foreign countries [3]

The Conference laid stress on Hindu Muslim accord and realised its importance to national development At its fifth session, Mr Ali Mohammed Bhimji moved a resolution that the Conference regarded with the deepest regret the many religious disputes between the lower classes of Hindus and Mohammedans which had occurred in several parts of the country and led to serious riots and loss of life Such disputes were he said fraught with great danger to the intimate social relations which should bind the two communities together The Conference was of opinion that if Panchayats were established with the sanction of the authorities and included the leading representatives of the two communities and if these Panchayats exerted themselves to remove by anticipation all grounds for misunderstanding their efforts would be attended with success and it accordingly recommended that those mixed Panchayats should be nominated by the local authorities and should include the leading members of the two communities and the rules framed by them with the cognizance of the authorities should be carried out and enforced and the Panchayat leaders should freely exert themselves to help the authorities in restoring peace and order and reconciling both the parties to live amicably together [24] In moving the resolution Mr Ali Mahomed con[illegible] that the riots were [illegible] religious quarrels but [illegible] stirred up by certain [illegible] and wicked people for their own ends He was [illegible] that both parties had come to [illegible] and that they had seen the end of such bad [illegible] The [illegible] why Hindus and Mohammedans [illegible] peacefully [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

together.[25]

The fifth session of the National Social Conference reaffirmed a resolution on travel abroad, passed at the fourth session holding that in the opinion of the Conference it was not desirable to excommunicate persons who undertook distant sea-voyages, and that Social Reform Associations be requested to exert itself to secure the retention by such persons of the social status enjoyed by them in their castes, Mr Charu Chandra Mitra moved and Mr. Tilak seconded the resolution which was unanimously passed.[26]

The movement in favour of sojourn abroad gradually gained ground, and M G. Ranade in his annual address to the sixth session of the National Social Conference expressed satisfaction that in the Bengal Presidency an agitation, initiated by Kuvar Vinaya Krishna Bahadur, and supported by such men as Sir Ramesh Chandra Mitra, Pandit Mahesh Chandra and Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea, had been carried on in the matter of removing hindrances in the way of the free admission of men who went to foreign countries Vyavasthas, numerously signed by Pandits and others, he added, had advanced the solution of that question to a sensible extent. In the North West Provinces and Oudh, he went on, the Kayastha Associations and their Conference had done a great deal for that community in the way of checking intemperance and extravagance and promoting education[27]

The lead in anti-Nautch Girl Movement given by the Madras Presidency, had been appreciated by social reformers all over the country, and the seventh session of the Conference noted with satisfaction the movement started in the Madras Presidency to discourage the employment of disreputable women at social and religious gatherings and expressed its trust that the local Associations would do their best to discountenance such entertainments[28] The Conference further expressed its opinion that

25 Ibid, pp 21-22
26 Ibid, p 25
27. Report, 5th N S C., App. pp 21-22
28 Report, 7th N S C, p 41.

the *Siapa System* of loud mourning and beating of the chest, which prevailed in Sind the Punjab North Western Provinces and Gujrat was a very objectionable and unreasonable practice and entailed great misery on the mourners and it recommended that Social Reform Associations in those parts of the country *should take steps to discontinue such practice* [29]

Great stress was laid by the reform associations on personal purity and quite a large number of them enjoined upon their members to observe a certain code of conduct with regard to personal purity The Hindu Social Reform Association founded in 1892 for example required its members to partake of light refreshments served by non Brahmans at social gatherings to *dine with re married parties and foreign travelled Hindus not to* keep a concubine not to give or attend nautch parties [30]

The Kayasthas in the Punjab were making some progress in this respect Their Sabha welcomed back Lakshmi Narain Lala Roshan Lal, and Lala Sewaram when they returned from England They also took back into their caste some Kayasthas who had become Mohammedans during their enforced exile beyond the seas [31] *General meetings of the Temperance and* Literary Clubs continued to be held at different places and sports *were also celebrated* [32] *In this field too the Punjab registered* satisfactory progress Thanks to the efforts of Mr Thomas Evans and Mr W S Caine M P Temperance Associations were established at Lahore Amritsar Jallundar Ludhiana, Ambala Delhi Ferozepur Dera Ismail Khan Gujarat Jhelum Wazirabad *Gujranwala Sialkot Rawalpindi Peshawar Montgomery and* Dharamsala In the Native States Temperance Societies were established at Patiala, Bahawalpur Phagwara, and Quetta Temperance workers were very active at the last named place [33] But the most popular of all the Temperance Societies in the

29 Ibid p 44
30 Ibid p 45
31 Ibid p 60
32 Ibid. p 65
33 Ibid. p 135

Punjab was the Caine Total Abstinence Association.[34] The most welcome feature, however, in this connection was the Kayastha Temperance Club Among the Hindus the Kayasthas were most notorious for their love of wine So it was a welcome move. A redeeming feature was that leading members of the Club were mostly students of colleges [35]

The rulers of the Native States also showed keen interest in social reform. In 1894 the Maharaja of Kashmir presided over a Social Reform Association founded in that state and also took steps to stop the practice of hired crying and beating of the chest. The custom which prevented the father from seeing the face of his daughter after she was married was also discontinued The rulers of Baroda, Indore, Kapurthala, Bhavnagar, Morvi, Gondal, Wadwan, Cooch Behar, Kolhapur and many other States crossed the seas—some of them with large retinues and some with their wives and children.[36]

In his address to the eighth session of the National Social Conference, Ranade eulogised the admirable work done by the caste Conferences He particularly referred to a regular cobweb of Baradari and Caste Associations in the Punjab which were trying to bring about social changes. Ranade referred even to a Mohammedan Conference, in which Hindus joined, having been held and having passed resolutions condemning nautch and extravagance in social ceremonies.[37] The aims of the Hindu Social Reform Association, Hyderabad, were among other things, to discourage nautch girls and immoral life generally and to observe and encourage total abstinence from drinks and other intoxicating drugs [38]

The communal tension engaged the attention of the social reformers time and again. At the 9th National Social Conference, Mr. Ali Mahomed Bhimji moved the fourth resolution that while it was a matter of general satisfaction that the relations between

34 Ibid, p 136.
35 Ibid, p 139
36 Report, 8th. N S C, p 48
37 Ibid, p 50
38 Ibid, p 64.

the Hindus and Mohammedans in the North Western Provinces and Oudh had assumed their normal character of mutual help and toleration the Conference regretted that their relations had not been equally satisfactory in some parts of the Presidencies of Bombay and the Punjab and there had been unfortunate misunderstanding between the Hindus and the Native Christians in one or two places in the Madras Presidency The Conference recommended to all Social Reform Associations that it was their first duty to cultivate friendly relations with professors of all creeds and that they should lend their active support to the efforts made by Government to establish a better understanding between all classe by pressing for the creation of mixed conciliation boards to settle misunderstanding before they broke out in open violence [39]

Temperance movement gained momentum and the Report of the Kayastha Temperance Society for 1894 sent by its Secretary Munshi Kamta Prasad showed that the progress made was not inconsiderable Established in 1892 at the Kayastha Conference meeting at Ajmere this Society had branch societies established all over India It had done admirable work which was acknowledged even by high Government officials [40]

The mismanagement of temple property had been one of the fertile sources of evils in Hindu society the priests squandered not only the income of the temple they also exploited the religious credulity of the people It was to put an end to this source of corruption that the 10th National Social Conference resolved that in the opinion of the Conference it was desirable pending further discussion of the proposed amendment of the Temple Endowment Act of 1863 that the Local Government should take steps to frame rules for requiring the Temple Committee and Trustees to publish full accounts of their principal receipts and expenditure in the Official Gazette of each Province for the information of all concerned and the proper administration of these funds This resolution was moved by no less a

39 Report 9th N.S.C p 31
40 Ibid App p 50

person than Surendra Nath Banerjea himself,[41] By another resolution this Conference recommended that every effort should be made to promote friendly feelings between people of different races and belonging to differant creeds [42] It was further resolved that steps should be taken to impart religious and moral education in Government schools in school hours, so as to counteract, to some extent, the evil complained of about the existing Western education being too secular in character This resolution was moved by Bipin Chandra Pal [43]

As time passed by, philanthropy attracted the attention of the people The Hitkari Sabha of Baranagore, for example, was started to help the poor and specially the helpless orphans and widows of respectable families, to help the sick with medicines, diet etc, to bear the cost of cremation on behalf of those who could not afford to do so, to help deserving and poor students with books and school fees, and to suggest measures conducive to good sanitation by moving the Municipal authorities.[44]

By its Resolution XI the National Social Conference of 1887 recorded its satisfaction that some two hundred converts to other faiths were received back into Hindu society in the Punjab that year, and that stray instances of such readmissions had taken place in other provinces also It was asserted that Hindu society could not afford to be exclusive on that point without danger to its existence and the Conference recommended the Social Reform Associations to interest themselves in the subject with a view to facilitating such re-admissions in all instances where it was sincerely sought.[45]

The thirteenth National Social Conference again reverted tothe theme of Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony Mr R C Dutta moved that the Conference noted with satisfaction that good relations had on the whole prevailed between the Hindu and Mohammedan communities throughout the year, and

41 Report, 10th N S C, p 22
42 Ibid, p 34
43 Ibid, p 56
44 Report, 11th N S C App p. 71
45 Ibid, App p 92

at Delhi and other places friendly gatherings had been held by each community where the representatives of the other were freely welcomed and the Conference expressed the hope that the same good feelings would continue to prevail between the two communities and all subjects likely to excite conflict and misunderstanding would be carefully avoided on both sides[46] The resolution was seconded by Hazi Riazuddin Ahmed of Bareilly and supported by Shaik Hussain Shaik Chand

Resolution XIII welcomd the attempt of the Education Department of the North Western Provinces at the encouragement of the physique of the boys by annual tournaments and giving of prizes to primary secondary schools and college boys and recommended the physical progress of the younger generation to all Reform Associations[47]

Local associations also devoted themselves to the furtherance of communal harmony and other reform items Thus the Shanti Ashram Gujarat Punjab had the following objects in view—the promotion of friendly feelings between Hindus and Mohammedans and the inculcation of the spirit of toleration among persons of different religions and readmission of converts from other faiths to Hinduism The Ashram had a seminary called *Satyugi Mandali* where men and women without distinction of creeds and castes were admitted[48] The *Purity Journal* of the Punjab Purity Association advocated pure personal conduct in social life[49] *Pavitra Holi* meetings were also held to propagate the celebration of Holi in a more dignified befitting and decent manner[50] The Palanpur Social and Literary Association established in 1898 aimed at total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating drugs and spirituous liquors except on medical advice anti nautch movement abstention from giving or attending dinner at funerals maintaining inter communication with

46 Report 13th N S C p 35
47 Ibid pp 55
48 Ibid App p 29
49 Ibid App p 30
50 Ibid App p 31

persons of one's own caste, who had returned from foreign travel.[51]

That these different associations had achieved success to a large extent was testified to by M G Ranade. In 1897 he was able to report that nearly all reform associations were pledged to support the Purity movement, including the anti-nautch and Temperance agitation, and considerable progress was made under both these heads[52] Chandavarkar, however, wanted to go ahead faster still. Beginning with the amalgamation of sub-castes, he wanted finally to abolish the caste distinctions altogether. So he encouraged interdining as far as possible.[53] The urge to go to England was very strong, and generally the England-returned people were readmitted into the caste after performing Prayashchita(purification) ceremony. Chandavarkar was opposed to this purification ceremony, because it encouraged the sinner to commit sin, and going to England was no sin[54] But he was opposed to dictation in matters of reform. No reform, in his opinion was to be promoted, unless the people had been taught both by precept and example that it was a reform which was not only essential but also consistent with the principle of morality[55] Life of purity was also stressed upon by the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association in its programme, lectures and newspapers.[56]

In 1897 several gentlemen of the Saraswat Brahman Community returned from England. Though the High Priest of the caste refused admission to them, the reform parties at Mangalore and in North Canara openly showed spmyathies with them. Raja Nowlojee Rao Gujar returned from England and was received and Messrs Booti and Alonikar of Nagpore, Mr. Krishna Rao Bholanath of Ahmedabad, Professor Gokhale of Poona and Mr. Ketkar of Gwalior were similarly admitted by some of their caste people.[57] Two Bhatia gentlemen for the first

51. Ibid, App p 41
52 Ranade, M G., *Essays*, p 163
53 Chandavarkar, N G, *Speeches*, p 72
54. Ibid, pp 72-73
55 Ibid, p. 74
56. Ibid, p 75
57. Ranade, M.G, *Essays*, p 161

time in their community left for England with the full support of their caste In the Punjab several gentlemen in the Biradari castes went to England and were admitted back into their caste without any opposition Two youngmen from the Aurorbans caste went to England The liberal section of the Kashmir Pandits Sabha were also in favour of foreign travel[58] During this period the admission of converts from other faiths into Hinduism made progress The Suddhi Sabha admitted nearly two hundred Mohammedan converts Previously this move ment had been confined only to the Punjab but in 1897 there were instances of such conversions in Bengal the North Western Provinces as well as Burma The Shuddhi Sabha and the Arya Samaj took lead in this movement[59]

The Friends Social Union Calcutta started in April 1897 by some of the graduates and under graduates residing in Calcutta aimed at promoting the work of social reform improving the moral of the boys and prohibiting the use of intoxicating liquors and drugs[60]

In 1899 the National Social Conference again noted with satisfaction the good relations between Hindus and Muslims and recommeded the promotion of the same[61] By another resolution the Conference expressed pleasure that in several places especially at Bombay Ahmedabad Lucknow Allahabad and Bulandshahar successful attempts had been made for the readmission into caste of England returned people[62] It was a matter of pleasure the Conference noted that certain caste organisations e g the Kayastha Bhargava Vaishya and the other Sabhas were taking steps to organise charities for the education of boys and for the relief of widows and orphans But it cautioned against indiscri minate charity[63]

It further expressed satisfaction with the efforts made by

58 Ibid p 162
59 Ibid p 164
60 Report 13th N S C App p 84
61 I S R Vol X p 157
62 Ibid p 157
63 Ibid pp 157 158

the Kayastha Sabhas and by other Temperance Associations at Amritsar, Lahore, Allahabad, Sukkai, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Calcutta, Bellary and other places to check the spread of the use of intoxicants, liquors and narcotic drugs, and the Conference trusted that every effort would be made by all Associations in the country to include the Temperance Pledge as obligatory on all their members [64]

All generally agreed that there should be purity and the practice of giving nautch parties by way of entertainment on religious and other occasions should be discouraged It was noted that considerable success had been attained in this respect at Lahore, Ahmedabad, Sukkar, Nasik, Mangalore, Bellary and other places, but there was yet scope for considerable improvement So the necessity of strict observance of personal purity in speech, thought and action was to be insisted on by every Association in the pledge of membership as a matter which could admit of no compromise, until the use of nautch girls in religious and temple services and processions and the abuse of Holi were checked everywhere, and more innocent entertainments were substituted in their place [65] Great progress had been made in removing difficulties from the way of foreign-travelled people in admitting them back into their castes Mr Mulji Vedant, Bar-at-law, was admitted into the caste in Bombay after return from England In the North-Western Provinces a Thakur and a Vaishya were admitted into caste at Bulandshahar In Lucknow also two gentlemen were admitted into caste [66]

The *Shuddhi* movement made good progress during the year 1899 The reports received from some of the towns in the North-Western Provinces, the Central Provinces and the Punjab gave satisfactory evidence that the question of the admission of converts back into Hindu society had been successfully attempted by the Arya Samaj as also by certain castes and communities. In the Punjab certain communities had thus been helped to raise

64 Ibid , p 157
65 Ibid , p 158
66 Ibid , p 174

in the social scale The Conference (of 1899) recommended this subject to the favourable attention of the Association in other Provinces as such admission could not fail to promote the cause of sincerity in matters of religious faith and in other respects create social fellow feeling everywhere[66a] Both Christian and Mohammedan converts were admitted into the Arya Samaj and in some cases into the Brahman and the Sikh community The number of such admissions was 25 or 30 In the Punjab several Christian converts were reclaimed In the C P a Deccani Brahman convert to Christianity was reclaimed by the heads of his own caste[66b] The resolution on reclamation to the Hindu society was repeated in 1900[66c]

During 1899 the work of the Purity Association at Lahore Bellary Coconada and other places showed progress The work of temperance was specially attended to by the Kayastha Temperance Society Some Purity and Temperance Associations had their own magazines *e g* the Jain Sabha in North Western Provinces the Cutchee Dossa Oswal Mandal the Bhargava Sabha the Sanmarga Sabha and the Bhatia Mandal owned such magazines Also the magazine conducted by the daughter of Sasipada Banerji paid attention to these things[67]

So far as the evil of drink was concerned the Amritsar Temperance Society adopted the following measures[68] for the eradication of this evil (1) lectures were given and songs sung to serve as an appeal to the learned an instruction to the uncultured and amusement to all (2) Temperance processions were often taken out and (3) publication and free distribution of tracts leaflets and booklets in the most common languages prevalent among the people was resorted to (4) there was street preaching (5) performance of Temperance Dramas was organised (6) a Temperance Reading Room was started and (7) award of prizes as an incentive and stimulus towards the special

66a I.S.R Vol X p 155
66b Ibid p 174
66 I.S.R Vol XI p 175
67 Ibid. p 175
68 Report 14th N S C App pp 44-45

study of Temperance literature was instituted.

Where religious heads and caste sabhas lent their support to the reform movement, the work of the reformers was easy. Thus the Swami of the Saraswats of Canara declared himself against the celebration of the Holi festival in the lewd and vulgar fashion which was so very common.[69] This gesture on the part of the Swami strengthened the hands of the reformers. Similarly a successful caste conference of the Bunjahi Khatris, held at Patiala in March, 1900, passed resolution against nautches by prostitutes forming part of a marriage procession in future and also display of fire-works on the occasion. It also protested against females being allowed to sing in the street or in the bazar to celebrate a marriage, and their being allowed to go with unçovered faces and beat their breasts in the sight of the public to demonstrate their sorrow on the occasion of death [70]

By 1900,* the several Temperance and Purity Associations in the Punjab had done admirable work The work of the Amritsar Temperance Society has already been referred to [71] The Punjab Temperance Society was represented at the World Temperance Congress in London But there was one defect in the movement, while attempts were made to wean away the educated classes from the evils of drink, nothing was done to save the poorer classes [72]

The Punjab Purity Association did useful philanthropic and charitable work. The *Purity Servant*, organ of the Purity Association, advocated the cause of purity, morality, total abstinence and catholic religion, and preached reverence to elders,

69. I S R , Vol X, p 225

70 Ibid , p 273

* In 1898-1899, the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was established The prominent persons were-Mahant Keshav Ram Ray (Benares), Bipin Chandra Pal (Bengal), Shyam Kishore Varma (N W P), Yashvant Javaji Dabir (Bombay). By 1900, there were 283 temperance societies in different parts of India, affiliated to the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association The Association conducted its propaganda through a quarterly journal, the *Abkari* (K C. Vyas, *The Social Renaissance in India*, p 136)

71 Supra, 290

72. I S R Vol XI, pp. 158-159

and admiration and veneration for all that is good in men and sacred writings of all nations and of all ages. Several charitable institutions were maintained by the Association. It had a Homeopathic Charitable Dispensary, the Punjab Central Orphanage and a Widow Relief Fund. An important institution maintained by it was the *Pavitra Holi* annual gathering with a view to purging the Holi festival of its obscenity and impurity. It also led a crusade against nautch and the labours of the Association bore fruit in that the nautch was practically abolished from many marriages and public sentiment was awakened. Attempts were made also at the regulation of brothels.[93]

The National Social Conference at Lahore in 1900 again welcomed the attention paid by the Education Departments of the Punjab, the North Western Provinces and Bombay to physical education through tournaments in schools and colleges. It further reiterated the resolution passed in 1899 with regard to the Temperance Movement, stressed the acceleration of the pace of progress of the purity and anti nautch movement and urged the speedy eradication of evils which were devitalising the Nation.[94] The Conference also noted with satisfaction that the social hindrances in the way of admission into Hindu society of those of its members who had undertaken distant sea voyages were being gradually removed and it recommended that where the prejudice against such admission was still strong, Reform Associations should help this most desirable change by all means in their power.[95]

More and more youngmen continued to cross the seas for the prosecution of higher studies. In March 1901 Mr P V Pandurang Rao, a youngman of South Canara, accepted one of Tata's Scholarships and went to England to compete for the Civil Service. Mr [illegible] Balaji [illegible] with family [illegible] left for England [illegible] for his son's education.[96]

[illegible]

93 Report [illegible]
94 I.S.R. [illegible]
95 Ibid p 1[illegible]
96 Ibid p 233

Progress in other directions also continued unabated. In March, 1901, the Saraswats of Mangalore dispensed with the nautch girl in their celebration of the Holi festival that year.[77] One of the resolutions passed by the Second Bombay Temperance Conference (1901) was that the employment of bar maids in liquor-shops should be prohibited by legislatures as in South Australia[78] In June, 1901, Mr Tilak exhorted the Hindu community at Poona to readmit persons who had become converts to Christianity during a famine.[79]

There were also occasional set-backs, and interested people tried to hold back the pace of progress Thus in June, 1906, the *Madras Temperance Herald* complained that there were undoubtedly in Madras half-a-dozen or more societies whose one aim and end was to stem the tide of intemperance, yet withal the work during the previous year instead of progressing was going backwards. *The Indian Social Reformer* was shocked to find that new methods of advertising liquors were being adopted. The owner of a liquor-shop in Madras announced by the beat of drum that whoever bought a certain quantity of country liquor from his shop on that day would receive a free meal.[80]

The National Social Conference (December, 1901) repeated the resolution passed in the previous years. It noted with satisfaction the sea-voyage movement and the success which in Bengal and the Punjab had so far attended the efforts to do away with the restrictions placed on the readmission of foreign-travelled men into the community, and suggested the desirability of uniting all those efforts in one organic movement which would cover the whole country The Conference reaffirmed its previous resolutions on the subject of exercising greater control and supervision over religious endowments, whose management was then in many respects and in many places far from satisfactory. It was of opinion that organised efforts should be put forth to promote the growth of temperance and social purity It further

77 Ibid , p 241
78 Ibid , p. 281
79 Ibid , p 313.
80. Ibid., p 329.

emphasized the desirability of encouraging the readmission into the pale of Hindu society of those who sought readmission into it after having been once converted to other faiths It was also stressed that the time had come when the Hindu Calendar * which had not been revised for a long time, should be recast [81]

The Provincial Conferences were advocating the same reforms as the National Conference The Madras Provincial Conference [82] Cocanada, June 1902 strongly protested against the use of intoxicating liquors and drugs in Society and earnestly recommended that steps be taken to prevent their use for other than bonafide medical purposes With a view to checking the growing immorality in Society, the Conference urged on Govern ment the necessity of empowering local authorities to compel registration of adoption before maturity of girls born to or brought up by dancing girls or prostitutes In its opinion foreign travel did not entail loss of caste and so it directed the local Reform Associations to endeavour to remove the hindrances in the way of admission into society of men who had travelled abroad Seeing that some of the *Samajas* in the Punjab and Bengal had admitted converts to Christiın and Mohammedan faiths back to Hindu society the Conference recommended that that example should be followed by the Social Reform Associ ations in Madras Presidency also

Similarly the Bombay Provincial Conference [83] Sholapur 1902 viewed with pleasure the increasing number of foreign going students and recommended that every encouragement be given to promising youths or other persons travelling to foreign countries and on their arrival back every facility be afforded for their readmission in their respective castes It also affirmed the necessity of introducing moral and as far as possible religious instruction in schools and colleges Th~ Conference stressed that more efforts should be made by Temperance and Reform

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81 I S R XII XII p 153
* It is no accident that independent India has revised her National Calendar
82 I S R Vol XII p 325
83 I.S.R. Vol. XIII p 79

Associations to check the growth of the vice of drink. It urged that caste heads and *Gurus* should be approached and their co-operation secured for this purpose.

By 1902 the Kayastha Conference also seemed to have achieved notable success in the direction of Temperance Reform. At a meeting held at Bankipur, a speaker quoted a passage from the Report of the Excise Administration to the effect that the fall in the Excise revenue of a certain district was due to the fact of the Kayasthas of that district having given up the habit of drinking[84]

The *Indian Social Reformer* reported in November, 1902, that the anti-nautch movement was progressing satisfactorily An important accession to it was the Madwa at Amritsar which had passed a resolution authorising the ulema to organise within their respective spheres of influence, a compaign against the system of engaging dancing girls to form a part of marriage assemblies and processions. On this the *Bengali* observed that when the Muslim Madwa joined forces with the Hindu reform party and proclaimed a combined attack upon the citadel of the sorceress of melody, her case would become absolutely past praying for[85]

The National Social Conference, 1902, (Ahmedabad) noted with satisfaction the increasing number of Hindus who undertook sea-voyages for study, business or other purposes, and impressed on the people the necessity of encouraging this wholesome movement in all possible ways and of discouraging all attempts to treat foreign-travelled men as aliens and foreigners.[86] It further affirmed the necessity of introducing moral and, as far as possible, religious instruction in schools and colleges The Conference also endorsed the resolution passed at previous Conference in favour of increased efforts for the promotion of temperance and social purity.[87] The necessity of

84 Ibid , p 26
85, Ibid , p 95
86. Ibid , p 168
87 Ibid., p 169.

readmitting repentant converts to Hindu society was again stressed[88]

This work of taking back non Muslims to Hinduism continued unabated. On 14th June 1903 Mr Abdul Ghaffoor B A was converted to the *Arya Dharma* at Gujranwala. This was a memorable and great event in the history of the Arya Samaj. He was the first gentleman Muslim by birth to be converted to the *Arya Dharma*[89] The purification ceremony of Munshi Abdul Kadir Khan Mohammedan by birth took place in the *Mandir* of the Arya Samaj Meerut on the 31st January 1904[90]

The National Social Conference Madras (December 1903 and January 1904) repeated the resolution on sea voyages* passed in 1902 and noted with satisfaction the efforts made to introduce religious and moral education in some educational institutions in the country and suggested its extension in all possible ways[91] A new note struck by this Conference was that Hon ble Mr Venkat Rao advocated that another reform which every well wisher of India would like to see brought about was to improve the caste system as it then prevailed if not to do away with it completely[92] It is remarkable that so far amalgamation between the sub castes only had been advocated

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88 Ibid p 169
89 Ibid p 430
90 I S R Vol XIV p 344
* A number of Native Princes visited England in 1903 in honour of the Sovereign s Coronation The Maharaja of Jaipur a very orthodox Hindu also visited England It was because of the world force or time spirit that ideas of social reform were working ahead (N G Chandavarkar *Speeches* p 104)

In 1904 the Bhatias and the Kapole Banias in Bombay Presidency were facing the problem of receiving back foreign returned young men of their communities (Ibid p 1 [illegible]) The Malayala Community of Travancore accorded a cordial welcome to [illegible] England returned man and took him back [illegible] Mr Venkat Rao returned from England in 1904 and was welcomed by his Brahman caste people without any ado or fuss (Ibid p 17[illegible]) [illegible] 231 23[illegible]
91 I S R Vol XIV pp 231 23[illegible]
92 Report 17th N S R p 43

by the National Social Conference It was for the first time that the modification of the caste system itself, if not its immediate abolition, was urged.

The Temperance Movement continued to make satisfactory progress The Third Bombay Temperance Conference was held on the 27th April, 1904 At it the following societies were represented—The Indian Temperance Association. The Independent Order of good Templars, the Independent Order of Rechabites, The Bombay Temperance Union, the Anjuman-i-Islam, The Presidency Social Reform Association, The Saraswat Brahman Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Coronation Literary Society, The Bhatia Mitra Mandal, the Bombay Missionary Conference, The Pathare Prabhu Young Men's Temperance Club, and The People's Association, Sholapur [93] The All India Temperance Conference opened at Benares on 26 12 1905 [94] The Report on the Kayastha Temperance Reform in 1904-1906 stated inter alia, " . drunkenness at general feasts in the community has entirely disappeared During previous years large amounts used to be spent on drinking wine during marriage feasts among Kayasthas The guardian of the bridegroom does not now-a-days insist on the bride's guardian to serve wine to the former's party. Simultaneously with wine-drinking, meat-eating has also been put a stop to. The Holi festival used to be a great occasion for wine-drinking among the Kayasthas Now this habit of wine-drinking during the festival has died out On the occasion of visits by friends and relations the latter used to be served with wine. This custom has also disappeared now. Drinking in private is also on the decline, as well as habitual wine-drinking "[95]

The Madras Provincial Social Conference, 1906, passed a resolution in favour of foreign travel It further resolved that as the existing restrictions obtaining among the Hindus on inter-dining and inter-marriages among sub-sections of castes had a

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93 I SR , Vol XIV, p 409

94 I SR , Vol p 224

95. Report, 21st N.S C App. 108-109.

pernicious effect the Conference was of opinion that those must be removed and that every effort should be made to overcome those restrictions [96] The Conference also viewed with extreme regret the evil of the drink habit among the educated classes and urged on all interested in the cause of progress to do all in their power to check the evil It noted with satisfaction that a higher standard of social purity was getting recognised and it impressed on all members of Reform Associations and friends of progress the importance of promoting healthy public opinion in this matter [97]

The Temperance Conference at Calcutta (December 1906) deplored the constant and continued increase in the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs in India and urged upon the Government of India to check the growth of drink habit It resolved that children in the schools throughout the country should be definitely taught the nature and effect of the use of alcoholic liquors and urged the introduction of compulsory instruction on this subject as part of the syllabus in all primary secondary and high schools It stressed that the moral sense of the community should be developed and so appealed to the Temperance Associations and all religious and social leaders to redouble their efforts in arousing the people among whom they worked to secure a more enlightened public opinion on the subject throughout India [98]

The Central Provinces Social Conference (May 1907) recommended to its members promotion of temperance and social purity removal of social restrictions in the way of readmission into society of Hindus returning from foreign countries beyond the seas meting out of a brotherly and cordial feeling to the Mohammedan brethren revival of the Panchayat system establishment of orphanages and the appointment of a band of missionaries to preach the social gospel among the masses [99]

96 I S R. Vol XIV p 524
97 Ibid p 524
98 I.S R Vol XVII pp 219 220
99 Ibid p 428

urther they would point out to Your Excellency while in the ase mentioned above before the Assistant Collector of Poona the accu ed were found guilty and sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for two weeks and to pay a fine of Rs 10/ the child remained in their guardianship and will no doubt be handed over to the evil life to which they have destined her Your memorialists desire to represent to Your Excellency that the purpose of the law which is to protect minor children from parents and guardians who have proved themselves unfit to act as such is frustrated unless those minor children are removed from the care of such guardians and placed by the Magistrate in the charge of those who will morep roperly fulfil their duties towards him In requesting that Your Excellency s Government should take such steps as shall secure that these children be placed in the care of proper guardians those of your memorialists who are connected with Christian missions beg to state—in order to prevent misunderstanding—that they do not ask that such children be placed in Mission Orphanage but only that they be removed from the care of those who have forfeited their rights as parents and guardians and placed where they would be brought up to live a respectable life

Your memorialists earnestly request that these facts be taken into consideration and that measures be devised by Your Excellency s Government to prevent the scandal and to carry into execution a law which is to a large extent a dead letter They would suggest at the same time that the attention of the police authorities be drawn to the fact that few prosecutions have taken place under this section of the Code while it is a matter of common knowledge that it is constantly broken that the fact of the illegal character of the ceremony be prominently notified at places at which it is frequently performed such as *Jijuri* and that it is indicated that the temple authorities in permitting the ceremony within the temple precincts are accessory to the crime and punishable as such

Your memorialists beg to point out in conclusion that this practice prevails among the humblest and most ignorant

classes of the community and that for that reason it is likely to be checked only by stringent measures In taking action to put an end to what constitutes an open sore in the life of the people, Your Excellency s Government will be warmly supported by all the enlightened and intelligent sections of the Hindu community."[100]

The Government showed a sympathetic attitude to the memorial, submitted to it by Dr Bhandarkar and others complaining of the prevalence of a custom of marrying young girls to Hindu gods and praying that measures be taken to check the practice, but suggested that before legislation could be resorted to, the education of Hindu public opinion was necessary. However, Government was prepared to help in the protection of minor Muralis It would be better if the Hindu community itself established homes for the future care of such minors. There were other agencies of help, if the community did not object to the co-operation of the Society for the Protection of Children, started in Bombay, or to putting such girls under the protection of the Missionary Societies. In the opinion of the Government, homes established, endowed and managed by the Hindu community itself would be by far the most suitable solution [101]

When once, however, the conscience of the community had been shocked by the evils that had crept into the *Devadasi* system, progress was bound to be made, it was only a matter of time Referring to a report,[102] in the *Times of India*, the *Indian Social Reformer* hailed May 6, 1909, as a red-letter day in the annals of social reform, because it was on that day that the Maharaja of Mysore adopted a 'wise, courageous and righteous measure' by abolishing the system of *Devadasis* [103]

100 I.S R , Vol XVI p 486

101 I S R , Vol XVII, p 572

102 "The Mysore State have to-day permanently abolished from their Muzrai, (ecclesiastical), temple establishment the system of Devadasis (female servants of God), on the ground that the high ideals entertained of their calling have long since degenerated and that they are now notorious women of loose morals "

(*Times of India*, quoted in I S R., Vol XIX, p. 422)

103 I S R , Vol XIX, p 422

By a proclamation the same year in July the dedication of minor girls as Muralis, Aradhinis Bhawanis Devadasis Joginis and Basris was prohibited under Section 372 of the Indian Penal Code [104]

In other directions also the scope of social reform was widening Just as the Indian National Congress was becoming more vocal and progressive in its demands so the National Social Conference also was becoming more radical in its approach to matters social The social reformers under the cautious guidance of Ranade had begun with demanding the amalgamation of sub castes now they insisted on the amalgamation of the different castes within Hindu society Thus Resolution X of the Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1912 welcomed practical steps being taken by various castes to unite completely all their respective sub castes into one caste and to encourage free interdining among members of different castes and urged Social Reform Associations to strenuously support both movements It further laid down that for the attainment of the ideal of unifying all Hindus into one homogeneous community Government be requested by special legislation to place beyond doubt the validity of marriage between Hindus belonging to different castes and sub castes [105] The Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1914 resolved that it should thenceforward include only those persons who aspired at individual and social uplifting by promoting personal morality and by doing away with all artificial social distinctions based on caste birth creed or sex [106] The same Conference by Resolution XII urged that the movements of co operation and social service should be extended throughout the Presidency as part of social reform [107] The same year there was an open inter caste dinner in Bombay in which 185 gentlemen and ladies (161 men and the rest ladies) participated [108]

The great change in social outlook manifested itself in the

104 Ibid p 544
105 Report Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1912 p 33
106 Report Bombay Provincial Social Conference 1914 p 30
107 Ibid p 146
108 Ibid pp 160-161

emphasis that was now laid on the philosophy of social service The *Indian Social Reformer* in its editorial on 21.1.1912 remarked, inter alia "The Philosophy of social service has never been so elaborately, ably and alluringly presented as in the numerous volumes which some of the shrewdest and soundest thinkers of our time have written in the last few years We seem at last to have got to the common basis of politics and religion, the two great attractions of the human mind. Behind this philosophy of social service, is a vast educational movement which insists on practical work as the most direct and enduring means of knowledge. A worker in the social field gets many side-lights, and it is susceptible to many inspirations, from which the people who theorise for or against social reform are entirely cut off. This doctrine is deeply penetrating Indian education, and is already beginning to permeate our public life,"[109]

This urge for social service manifested itself in institutions for the removal of social impurities Thus the Holika Sammelan General Committee, Bombay, formed on 27 2 1911, devoted itself to the purification of the filthy aspect of the Holi festival It aimed at creating a strong public opinion against the excesses of Shimga, keeping off children from the unhealthy influence of the practices common during the Shimga days, impressing upon the minds of the unthinking classes the fact that those unholy practices had no foundation in either religion or morality, the provision of healthy amusements and counter attractions for the masses, and securing public support and popular enthusiasm Boys at schools and the labouring classes were approached. It organised public meetings, enlisted the sympathy of the heads of religious institutions and of ladies, arranged public lectures and also lectures for students It held elocution and singing competition of songs especially composed for the occasion for boys. Literature favouring purity was published and posters and pictures were distributed. It sent round a circular letter to authorities of Hindu schools advocating certain improvements in the celebration of Holi Entertainments such as magic

109 I S R, Vol XXII, p 243

lanterns kirtans purans Bhajans, gramophone singing concerts hypnotic performances and magic shows were encouraged Sports and sporting matches for boys and wrestling tournaments were organised[110]

Diwan Bahadur Samarth started in Baroda the Sunday Reading Society on the model of the Students Brotherhood of Bombay It held weekly meetings for the mutual benefit and advancement of the members and for creating a sort of healthy social atmosphere in Baroda[111]

The Native States as usual were in the forefront of this work of purification *The United India and the Native States* reported in September 1912 that the Maharaja of Kashmir and Jammu had issued an order forbidding nautches on the occasion of State functions It was a sensible order calculated to minimise to some extent the evils arising out of the abominable nautch system in that part of the country[112] During the same year the Anti Caste Conference organised by the Aryan Brotherhood Bombay (during Diwali holidays November 1912) was attended by a number of delegates and the proceedings throughout were characterised by much enthusiasm[113]

The Bombay Social Service League started Travelling Libraries for the benefit of the public The number of such libraries had grown up to 84 by May 1913 of which 47 were Marathi and 37 were Gujrati Fifteen libraries were especially given for ladies and 26 for the people of the depressed classes[114]

The tendency grew to equate Social Reform with Social Service Addressing the Visagapatam District Social Conference (1913) its president Mr B Sheshadri Rao said 'Social Reform is really Social Service Herein I detect the nobler elements of ocialism and positivism that have developed in England during the last century Of such programme of social work I may mention Temperance Demonstrations Social Theatrical classes for the

110 I S R Vol XII p 293
111 I S R Vol XXIII p 25
112 Ibid p 50
113 Ibid p 133
114 Ibid p 422

ıldren of workıngmen and the untouchables, organısed charıty ırk lıke poor feedıng, Cırculatıng Librarıes, organısatıon of me educatıon courses, organısatıon of fancy fairs of home dustrıes, management of Orphanages and Wıdows' Homes, scuıng women from the paths of vıce, publıc denuncıatıon of ıameless offenders agaınst all rules of decent lıfe, Saınt John mbulance Socıetıes, Lodges of good Templars, Leagues of 'elpıng Hand and so forth—all of whıch tend ın some way or ther to carry lıght and comforts to hearts that are weary and ͻavy-laden "[115]

As remarked earlıer, socıal reformers became more radıcal ıth the passage of years According to a resolutıon of the ombay Provıncıal Socıal Conference (1916), the institution of aste hındered the progress of the community ın all dırections nd so ıts abolıtıon was advocated As a first step towards thıs oal, the Conference welcomed the steps beıng taken by varıous astes to unıte wıth other castes, and it urged the frıends of ocıal reform to strenuously support and carry forward the ınıficatıon of castes [116] The same Conference turned ıts attentıon o the condıtıon of labourers also and Resolutıon XV passed by t noted wıth regret that the condıtıon of factory labourers was ııghly unsatısfactory ın the followıng matters ın ınsanıtary lwellıngs, neglect of chıldren's educatıon, want of proper nedıcal aıd, lavıty ın the observance of regulatıon about half-ımers, ındebtedness, and ıncrease of the vıce of drınk It urged ıpon the employers of factory labour to adopt early and adequate measures to mınımıse these evıls and called upon socıal reform bodıes to move actıvely ın the matter.[117] The Conference further ͻxpressed ıts opınıon that ıt was ımperatively necessary in the ınterest of socıal regeneratıon that prımary educatıon should be free and compulsory [118]

Caste was also attacked by Mr. Manoharlal Zutshı, whıle

115 Ibıd , p 547
116 I S R , Vol XXVII, p 126
117 Ibıd , p 127
118 Ibıd , p 127

addressing the 30th National Social Conference (Lucknow, 1916), as the greatest monster which the social reformers had to kill *It was not only the outward form of caste that was to be killed* but its very inner spirit which made every Hindu think in terms of caste It was this anti national spirit of pride and exclusive ness which the social reformer, he said must destroy and replace with the sense of man s duty to man irrespective of birth and rank [119]

In the opinion of Mr Zutshi outside forces themselves were *working in favour of social reform* *The First World War* itself was the greatest single factor 'Every Indian soldier return ing home from the battle fields of France, Turkey and Africa was bound to become a missionary of social reform in his native village Then again every new railway line built every new school opened every new factory started, helped more or less in breaking down the old barriers and weakening the strong holds of custom and caste Every movement educational political and industrial was helping the cause of social reform and every form of national activity was indirectly, if not directly contributing to it [120]

Despite these attempts at social reforms, there were still many ugly spots in the social life The Tamasha in Baroda was one such spot The Tamasha was the seat of all vulgarity and filthiness *It was the most powerful instrument of Satan to allure* youngmen from righteousness and virtue to wickedness and sin The very sight of the Tamasha horrified the senses of a moral man It marred the effect of education and incited the mob to revolt against all moral rules The magic glances and the wicked nautch of the dancing witch (Tamasha girl) excited the rudest passions of the spectators and effaced all moral culture and *shattered all moral bindings* *The dire effect of these Tamashas* upon young minds could never be over-emphasised The seed of morality which must grow with the growth of a boy was destroyed The sense of shame withered in the young mind

119 Ibid p 210
120. Ibid., p 210

that haunted the scene, and the youngman at last would fall a prey to the worst sort of vices owing to his indulgence in the depraved sight of the Tamasha[121] The *Indian Social Reformer* raised its powerful voice against this vice.

These facts notwithstanding, progress was visible on all sides. A deputation of ladies from different parts of India waited upon His Excellency the Viceroy to present an address on the subject of indentured labour. Among the signatories were Sarojini Naidu, Lady J C. Bose, Mrs. P K. Roy etc[122] This was a manifestition of the national anger and enthusiasm that had been aroused in India against the treatment meted out to indentured labourers abroad.

In his address at the Bombay Provincial Social Conference (1917), M.R. Jayakar deplored the lack of co-ordination between different reform societies. He stressed that there should be a Central Reform Association to serve as the unifying and co-ordinating centre. In Bombay alone, he enumerated, there were a large number of such excellent, but unrelated Associations — (1) Mr. Devadhar's Debt Redemption Society, (2) The Social Service League, (3) Depressed Classes Mission Society, (4) The minor Children's Protection Society, (5) The Students' Brotherhood, (6) The Night Schools, (7) The Temperance Association, (8) The Released Prisoners' Aid Society, (9) The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Society, (10) The Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association etc[123]

Still Societies continued to be formed for particular purposes. Thus the Hindu Missionary Society with its organ 'The *Hindu Missionary*', an Anglo-Marathi weekly, was started in July, 1917, to take back into the Hindu fold repentant converts[124] During this year the Bombay Provincial Social Reform Association wanted to present a memorandum on social reform to His

121 Ibid, p 344 Such Tamashas were common all over the country, especially on the occasions of fairs and hats

122. Ibid p. 366.

123 Ibid, p 522.

124 Ibid, p 602,

Excellency the Viceroy and the *Secretary of State for India*.[125] But permission was not granted for the same.[126]

Meanwhile the Aryan Brotherhood Conference, Bombay continued its crusade against caste. Towards the end of 1917 its third session was held and five resolutions against caste were passed.[127] Earlier in Baroda the Baroda Caste Usages Bill had been tried to control the evil effects of caste usages.[128] The condition of the workers had already attracted the attention of social reformers and it was to the credit of Messrs. Currimbhoy and Sons that they became pioneers in the movement for the intellectual and social elevation of factory workers by establishing a Workmen's Institute in the premises of their mills.[129]

By 1918 such a great change had taken place in the country that Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, President of the Madras Provincial Social Conference 1918 could say with satisfaction that caste was no longer what it had been except as regards inter marriage and widow marriage. In almost all other matters and amongst considerable section of the population it was steadily losing strength and influence with both the educated and the uneducated for the latter readily and intelligently co-operated with the former. Inter dining had become common and often food prepared by hands and in ways not sanctioned by custom was freely partaken. Dining with those who had broken the rules of the caste attracted little attention and entailed no inconvenience in the caste. Sea voyage was no longer visited with the customary pains and penalties. Excommunication was infrequent and had ceased to be effective. The old tyranny of the priest, the pandit and the neighbour had been replaced on their part by a creditable spirit of tolerance and even of active help. Again

125 I.S.R., Vol. XXVIII, pp. 136-38.
126 Ibid., p. 167.
The Aryan Brotherhood Conference in Bombay was perhaps the first secular movement in India to devote itself specially to the question of caste reform. (*Report Bombay Provincial Social Conference*, 1918, p. 6.)
127 I.S.R., Vol. XXVIII, p. 1[illegible]0.
128 I.S.R., Vol. XXVII, p. 391.
129 Ibid., p. 337.

the castes came together by then far more frequently and intimately than ever before. The tables of pollution and purification no longer regulated social intercourses in the larger towns and cities though they might have more or less operation in villages and the smaller towns And occasionally the Brahmans and non-Brahmans stayed in each other's houses as guests for a day or two. The call of the caste was generally faint and far off · either it fell on deaf ears or it went unheeded. Above all, with the rapid spread of education amongst Hindu women, associations of Hindu ladies of all castes were formed for diverse purposes of mutual benefit. These drew, as nothing else could, the castes closer together and prevented the great, and in many cases the decisive, influence of woman from being available to uphold the law of the caste[130]

Respect for the dignity and worth of the individual, Mr. Iyengar went on, was the root of Liberalism in any form, which stood for the pursuit of social good against class or dynastic interest and for the subjection of human judgment of all claims of external authority whether in an organised Church or in more loosely gathered societies or in books held sacred. Western education, he thought, had enabled the Indian mind to discover new worlds of knowledge, belief and sentiment, and to supersede dogma and authority, custom and inequality, by ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, which only if noble illusions, exercised an all-compelling away over the educated Hindu mind.[131] At the same Conference by Resolution IV C. Rajagopalachari moved that the caste system as in vogue at that time should be abolished.

130. Report, Madras Provincial Social Conference, 1918, pp 18-19
131 Ibid., p 22.

ELEVEN

The Advent of Gandhi

So long we have been discussing the various movements in India *running side by side* but not *merging in each other* All the reformers who worked for the regeneration of the national *life of India* realised the importance of progress in every walk of life but none had the energy time or capacity to work in every field—there was no single point on which all the currents of light could be focussed A Ram Mohan Roy was the crying need of the opening decades of the twentieth century, who could embody in his own personality the aspiration of an Awakened Nation and could give direction and meaning to the various movements in different walks of India s life, Such a man was found in Gandhi [1]

Before him there had been discussions and resolutions occasionally even mass movements such as the Swadeshi Movement at the time of the partition of *Bengal But these* movements were confined to the cities and towns they had little affected the rural areas India however lived in the villages and Gandhi wanted the villages to come to the forefront He aimed at bringing about a psychological revolution he wanted the people to shake off the imaginary ghost of fear his aim was to pull out his people from the false sense of refinement which hitherto had been attached to European civilisation Like an alchemist he transformed the very nature of the Indian people [2]

1 Also Cf Zacharias H C E op cit p 81
2 Cf Nehru J *The Discovery of India* pp 427-428

Gandhi made the Congress a democratic and mass* organisation Even previously it had been democratic, but confined to the upper classes Now the peasants rolled in. It looked like a vast agrarian organisation with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes.[3] To Gandhi the regeneration of India meant the transformation of rural life. "These questions of liberation of women, liberation of India, removal of untouchability, amelioration of the economic condition of the masses and the like resolve themselves into penetration into the villages, reconstruction or rather reformation of the village life."[4] His dream was to work for an India in which the poorest would feel that it was their country in whose making they had an effective voice; an India in which there would be no high class and low class of people; and an India in which all communities would live in perfect harmony. In such an India there could be no room for the curse of untouchability or the curse of the intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women would enjoy the same rights as men[5] India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, not opium or intoxicating liquors.[6] Hence Gandhi wanted real Swaraj and not constitutional Swaraj Constitutional Swaraj would profit but little if the internal problems—village reconstruction, temperance, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability—were not solved.[7]

This diagnosis of the disease led him to attach equal importance to social reform, and he carried the two—struggle for national emancipation and fight for social reform—simultaneously. Giving his presidential address to the Belgaum Congress, he treated Hindu-Muslim unity and the spinning wheel as equally important.[8] Referring to untouchability, he said, "Untouch-

* The Congress represented the masses and became a revolutionary body under the leadership of Gandhi. The president observed that it was a Congress in which, instead of the president and the leaders driving the people, the people drove him and the leaders. (Tendulkar, D.G , *Mahatma*, Vol II., p 38)

3. Ibid., p 429
4 Gandhi, M K , *Women and Social Injustice*, pp 10-11.
5 Gandhi, M K (Compiled by R.K. Prabhu), *India of My Dream*, p, 1.
6 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
7 Ibid , pp 8-9

ability is another hindrance to Swaraj Its removal is just as essential for Swaraj as the attainment of Hindu Muslim Unity This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take *Swaraj* till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed lasses They have sunk with the latter's suppression—the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindustan precisely as the English invaders treat us if not much wor e If so our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class [9] Therefore, the only national programme was Khaddar Hindu Muslim Unity and for the Hindus removal of untouch ability [10] The criticism levelled against it was that this programme would turn the Congress into a purely social reform organisation To this Gandhi would reply, "Everything that is absolutely essential for Swaraj is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction or the work of internal growth " [11]

Gandhi was always conscious that many of the social evils were responsible for retarding attainment of *Swaraj* and he would urge upon his countrymen, 'The sooner it is recognised that many of our social evils impede our march towards *Swaraj* the greater will be our progress towards our cherished goal To postpone social reform till after the attainment of *Swaraj* is not to know the meaning of *Swaraj* [12] That social and political progress are interdependent and there can be no question of precedence is amply clear from this statement The two things—the social reordering and the fight for political *Swaraj*—must go hand in hand There can be no question of precedence or division into watertight compartments here But a new social

9 Ibid p 742

10 Ibid p 747

11 Ibid p 747

12 Bose N K *Selections from Gandhi* p 125 Cf also *Women and Social Injustice* p 102

Bose, a Roy or the Poet* himself But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother tongue or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular Mine is not a religion of the prison house "[15]

All the planks in the platform of the Social Reform Movement were accepted by Gandhi, and he imparted something of his own magnetism to this movement also As in other fields he was a challenge to the modern world so in this field also he was a challenge to the current notions of social reform He raised the movement to a higher plane He stood for the total emancipation of women marriage reforms eradication of the evil of drink, removal of untouchability, and ideals of social service But his approach to life was different and so his method of reform was also different In place of competition he stood for co operation in place of contract he stood for dedication in place of self indulgence, he stood for self control and in place of violent conflict for the attainment of due rights he stood for gentle persuasion and non violent sacrifice and the acquisition of rights through the proper performance of duties For the eradication of social evils, he prescribed the path of suffering and sacrifice to women to the untouchables and to the downtrodden

He passionately desired the utmost freedom for women He detested child marriage He shuddered to see a child widow and shivered with rage when a husband just widowed contracted with brutal indifference another marriage He deplored the criminal indifference of parents who kept their daughters utterly ignorant and illiterate and brought them up only for the purpose of marrying them off to some youngmen of means [16] He wanted that the women of India should have as much share in winning *Swaraj* as men Probably in his peaceful struggle woman could outdistance man by many a mile because, in Gandhi's opinion

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* Bose Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose
Roy Dr P C. Roy
Poet Rabindranath Tagore

15 Bose N K op cit p 267
16 Gandhi M K *Women and Social Injustice* p 132

silent and dignified suffering was the badge of her sex[17]

Gandhi's fight was for all the women of the country and not for a few. In his presidential address to the Bombay Bhagini Samaj (February, 1918) he deplored that all the existing agitations were confined to an infinitesimal section of the people and full eighty-five per cent of the people of the country were passing their innocent days in a state of total detachment from what was going on around them.[18] He wanted the movement to embrace all. He was convinced that women could lift themselves up through purity. In order to remove blemishes attributed to women by the *Shastras*, India would have to produce women, pure, firm, and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi.[19]

He considered education as necessary for women as for men, because without education human beings would not be far removed from animals So though knowledge was necessary for women, he saw no justification for men depriving women of, or denying to them, equal rights on the ground of their illiteracy.[20] But he was not in favour of the same type of education being imparted to men and women, because their needs were different. "Man and woman are equal in status, but are not identical. They are a peerless pair being complementary to one another, each helps the other, so that without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived; and therefore it follows as a necessary corollary from these facts that anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of both. In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind."[21] Gandhi did not deem English education necessary for women, at least not necessary for everyday life. He did not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial enterprises. But women desiring or requiring to have English education could very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. He held that to introduce English

17. Ibid , p 163,
18. Ibid , p 3.
19 Ibid , p 4.
20 Ibid , p 5.
21. Ibid , pp 5-6 Compare *Vivekananda*, pp 175-176 Supra

education in schools meant for women would only prolong India's helplessness.[22] He regarded women as the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering and so her advent to public life should result in purifying it and in restraining unbridled ambition and accumulation of property.[23] He advised women not to ape the manner of the West which might be suited to its environment. Indian women must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and environment. Theirs must be the strong, controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingy rejecting what is base and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayantis, not of amazons and prudes.[24]

Gandhi upheld the view that man and woman had different spheres of work. Whereas the man should look to the main tenance of the family, the woman to the household management and thus the two should supplement and complement each other's labours.[25] But that did not imply that woman was inferior to man. Rather she was the queen, not the slave of the household over which she presided.[26] The art of bringing up the infants of the race was her special and sole prerogative and without her care the race must become extinct.[27]

Gandhi had the highest regard for women and he wanted their all round development, so he vehemently denounced such evils as had crept into the marriage system. He called those who insisted on child marriage as steeped in vice and a Reader of *Young India* reacted sharply complaining that neither the Hindu school reformer nor the Christian Missionary had ever made such a wild charge.[28] By early marriage Gandhi meant marriage well before the age of 25.[29]

In an even stronger language Gandhi condemned dowry

22 Ibid p 6
23 Ibid p 12
24 Ibid p 13
25 Ibid p 17
26 Ibid p 18
27 Ibid p 27
28 Ibid p 33
29 Ibid p 38

He wrote that any young man who made dowry a condition of marriage discredited his education and his country and dishonoured womanhood So he was in favour of a strong public opinion being created in condemnation of the degrading practice of dowry, and advocated the excommunication from society of such Youngmen as soiled their fingers with such ill-gotten gold. He would go still further, "Parents of girls should cease to be dazzled by English degrees, and should not hesitate to travel outside their little castes and provinces to secure true, gallant youngmen for their daughters "[30] Though Gandhi accepted the custom of dowry to be heartless, yet he was aware of the fact that this cruel custom did not touch the millions in India and that it was confined to the middle class who were but a drop in the ocean of Indian humanity. He chided the reformers that whenever they talked of evil customs they thought only of the middle class. There were millions living in the villages having their own customs and woes of which the reformers had as yet but little knowledge [31]

Certain concrete steps would have to be taken for the eradication of the evil, the girls or boys or their parents should break the bonds of caste, the age for marrying should also be raised and the girls should be prepared to remain spinsters if they did not get a suitable match. All this required education of a character that would revolutionise the mentality of the youth of the nation. But the system of education, Gandhi deplored, had no connection with the Indian surroundings and so they remained practically untouched by the education received by a microscopic minority of the boys and girls of the nation [32] There was definitely something wrong in the system of education that failed to arm girls and boys to fight against social or other evils That education alone, Gandhi held, was valuable which drew out faculties of a student so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department [33]

30 Ibid, p 58

31 Ibid, p 59

32. Ibid, pp 59-60

33 Ibid, p 60.

If the faulty education failed to bring out necessary social amelioration the father himself should make bold to refuse dowry He should cease to purchase a match for his daughter and should himself choose, or allow his daughter to choose one who would marry her for love and not for money If necessary, one should go for a match outside the caste and outside the province and thus make a breach in the double wall of caste and province[34] If the educated youths of the country, Gandhi hoped, especially sons of rich parents would resolutely set their faces against every form of wasteful expenditure on their account waste of national resources could easily be stopped[35]

For the progress of the nation the flowering of Indian womanhood was essential By seeking to interfere with the free growth of the womanhood of India Indians were interfering with the growth of free and independent spirited men What the Indians had done to their women and the untouchables was recoiling upon their heads with a force thousand times multiplied This offence against submerged humanity partly accounted for their own weakness, indecision narrowness and helplessness So it was every Indian s duty to tear down the *purdah* with one mighty effort[36]

This *purdah* was unknown in ancient India It was a recent institution, adopted during the period of Hindu decline Women like proud Draupadi, spotless Sita and Gargi could not have flourished behind the *purdah* Even in modern India purdah was not universal—it was unknown in the Deccan Gujrat and the Punjab and among the peasantry[37] The sooner this evil was discarded the better for the nation

Prepared to wipe every drop of tear from every eye, Gandhi s heart naturally wept at the help'ess condition of Hindu widows Like Annie Besant he had the highest regard for the Hindu widow who was a treasure to him He considered her as one of the gifts of Hinduism to humanity Ramabai Ranade

34 Ibid p 61
35 Ibid. p 64
36 Ibid p 99
37 Ibid p 100

might be cited as the example of such a gift, but the existence of girl widows was a blot upon Hinduism for which the existence of a Ramabai was no atonement.[38] Voluntary widowhood might be praised, but widowhood imposed by religion or custom was an unbearable yoke, and defiled the home by secret vice and degraded religion.[39] So Gandhi exhorted everyone having a child widow under his care to consider it his duty to get her married [40] This helpless widowhood was such a great curse as might destroy Hinduism some day. And he warned the Hindus that so long as they had thousands of widows in their midst, they were sitting on a mine which might explode at any moment. So if the Hindus were to be pure, if they wanted to save Hinduism, they must rid themselves of the poison of enforced widowhood.[41]

What Gandhi was most opposed to was not widowhood as such, but the invidious distinction between a widow and a widower. While widowhood was enforced upon woman, man was free to marry as and when he liked. He could easily give his support to voluntary widowhood and widowerhood, "I should any day subscribe to a reform in the Hindu Law making sinful the remarriage of a widow or a widower who voluntarily married after maturity."[42] But failing that, a widow should have the same discretion as a widower about remarriage.[43] Gandhi would go even to the length of saying that Indians were not worthy of ruling themselves so long as there was one single widow who wished to fulfil her fundamental wants, but was violently prevented from doing so. And when there were no men and women fit enough to work it, even the finest constitution conceivable dropping upon India from the House of Commons would be worthless.[44]

Gandhi also advocated intercaste marriage and interdining, though he did not denounce the institution of caste blindly, nor

38 Ibid, p 111
39 Ibid, p 108
40 Ibid, p 107
41 Ibid, p 109.
42 Ibid, p 112
43 Ibid, p 113
44. Ibid, p 118.

did he advocate its wholesale abolition He believed that children inherited the qualities of the parents as much as their physical features Environment did play an important part but the original capital on which a child started in life was inherited from its ancestors [45] To admit it frankly would make one conserve one s energy and acting up to it one would put a legitimate curb upon one s ambitions and thereby energy would be set free for extending the field of spiritual research and spiritual evolution It was this doctrine of *Varnashrama Dharma* which Gandhi had adopted [46] He regarded *Varnashrama* as a healthy division of work based on birth but the existing ideas of caste were a per version of the original There was no question of inferiority or superiority it was purely a question of duty Though *Varna* was based on birth it was possible for a *Shudra* to become a *Vaishya* In order to perform the duty of a Vaishya he did not need the label of a Vaishya One performing the duty of a Brahman would easily become one in the next incarnation [47] So the meaning of *Varna* was simple—it meant the following on the part of every body the hereditary calling of his forefathers in so far as that traditional calling was not inconsistent with fundamental ethics and this only for the purpose of earning one s livelihood [48] *Varna shrama Dharma* defined man s mission on this earth Man was born for some higher purpose and *Varnashrama* only conserved his energy by restricting him for the purpose of holding body and soul together to the occupation of his fore fathers Nothing more and nothing less than this was *Varnashrama Dharma* [49]

But Gandhi held that a person must show corresponding works and character to establish his claim by birth So a person would lose *varna* by failing to exhibit its peculiar characteristics Even inter varna marriage or interdining whatever virtue the restrictions on them might have would not affect a persons varna so much as the failing to live on to one s *Varna* Birth would

45 Bose N K op cit p 231
46 Ibid
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid
49 Ibid. p 23

only give a start and enable the parents to determine the training and occupation of their children, but it did not perpetuate the Varna of one's birth, if it was not fulfilled by works [50]

The existing caste organisations, according to Gandhi, were really trade guilds. From the economic point of view formerly its value was very great It not only ensured hereditary skill, it also limited competition. "It was the best remedy against pauperism. And it had all the advantages of trade-guilds Although it did not foster adventure or invention there, it is not known to have come in the way either.

"Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment or social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a heaven, and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration, born of avarice and greed "[51]*

The vast organisation of caste, Gandhi would assert, answered not only the economic and religious wants of the community, but it answered its political needs also. "The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation that was capable of producing the caste system its wonderful power of organisation "[52]

But the Mahatma decried the present day position of the caste system He considered the four divisions alone to be 'fundamental, natural and essential' The innumerable sub-castes were sometimes a convenience, but often a hindrance. And so the sooner the sub-castes were fused, the better for the nation.[53] He noted with distress that Varnashrama of the shastras was non-existent in practice in the India he wanted to rebuild, and that the existing caste system was the very antithesis of Varna-

50 Ibid , p 232
51 Ibid , pp 232-23
* Compare Vivekananda, also Dayananda
52 Ibid , p 233
53 Ibid

shrama So the sooner public opinion abolished it the better And he became gradually convinced that caste had nothing to do with religion It was harmful to both spiritual and national growth [54] He found that the terms brahmans and kshatriyas vaishyas and shudras were mere labels because the original spirit had passed away There was utter confusion of Varna as Gandhi understood and so he wished that all the Hindus should voluntarily call themselves shudras* That was the only way to demonstrate the truth of Brahmanism and to revive Varna Dharma in its true state [55]

The original four divisions defined a man s callings and they did not restrict or regulate social intercourse They only defined duties but conferred no privileges So Varnashrama the Mahatma upheld was not affected by interdining and inter marriage He admitted that Hinduism did most emphatically discourage interdining and intermarriage between divisions It was no part of a Hindu s duty to dine even with his son But this restriction was prescribed with a particular end in view By restricting his choice of bride to a particular group a Hindu exercised rare self restraint prohibition against interdining and intermarriage was essential for the rapid evolu tion of the soul This self denial was however no test of Varna Gandhi believed that the restraint in matters of marriage and dining was not based upon notions of superiority [56] So prohibition of intercaste dining and intercaste marriage was no part of Hindu religion They crept in only during the decadent phase of Hinduism and they were bound to disappear soon [57] The question of food and drink had and ought to have no social value and in varnashrama there was and there should be no prohibition of intermarriage and interdining [58]

54 Ibid p 234
* Gandhi wished so because he found that all the Hindus had been reduced to the position of helots under foreign domination
55 Ibid
56 Ibid pp 234 235
57 Ibid p 235
38 Ibid p 236

With the same vehemence and passion with which Gandhi advocated the cause of Indian women, he also pleaded for the eradication of the evil of untouchability. He considered it, as practised in India, a sin against God and men, which was eating into the very vitals of Hinduism [59] Hinduism had sinned in giving sanction to untouchability, which had degraded the Hindus and made them Pariahs. Gandhi would say that the 'touch me not'-ism that disfigured existing Hinduism was a morbid growth, that it only betrayed a woodenness of mind and a blind self-conceit, and that it was abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality [60] He was so much pained by their degradation that he himself wished to be born an untouchable to work for their salvation "I do not want to be reborn. But if I have to be reborn, I should be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition I, therefore, pray that if I should be born again, I should do so not as a brahman, kshatriya, vaishya or shudra, but as an atishudra "[61] Swaraj could never be reached, he wrote, with the poison of untouchability corroding the Hindu part of the national body. With one-fifth of India kept under perpetual subjection and the national culture denied to them, Swaraj was a meaningless term [61a]

This idea of the uplift of the depressed classes was innate in him, it was no product either of his bitter experiences in South Africa, or his study of Christian literature Speaking at the Depressed Classes Conference at Ahmedabad (April, 13 in the year 1920), he said, "I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism This idea was not brought home to me by my bitter experience during the South African struggle. It is not due to the fact that I was once an agnostic It is equally wrong to think that I have taken my views from my study of Christian

59 Gandhi, M K , *India of My Dreams* (compiled by R K Prabhu) p 65

60 Bose N K op cit , p 237

61 Ibid , p 238

61a Ibid , p 127

religious literature These views date as far back as the time when I was neither enamoured of nor was acquainted with the Bible or the followers of the Bible [62] The idea dawned on him when he was hardly twelve A scavenger named Uka who worked in the family was an untouchable Gandhi would often ask his mother why it was wrong to touch Uka why he (Gandhi) was forbidden to touch him (Uka) and why if he accidently touched Uka he (Gandhi) was made to bathe Though Gandhi naturally obeyed his mother he would often protest that untouchability was not sanctioned by the religion He had often tussles with his parents on this matter and he told his mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka as sinful [63]

Gandhi desired that the so called untouchables should develop clean and healthy habits but he knew that the evil of drink was the most pernicious habit which was proving the undoing of the poor pariahs So he scathingly criticised the pernicious evil and condemned drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution The habit of drink destroyed the soul of man and tended to turn him into a beast incapable of distinguishing between wife mother and sister The Mahatma had known men who had forgotten this distinction under the influence of liquor [64] It was his firm conviction that Nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is prey to the drink habit History records that empires have been destroyed through that habit We have it in India that the great community to which Shri Krishna belonged was ruined by that habit This monstrous evil was undoubtedly one of the contributory factors in the fall of Rome [65]

Another evil which was sapping the cultural life of the people and according to Gandhi was denationalising them was the imposition of a foreign medium * Among the many evils

62 Tendulkar D G *Mahatma* Vol II p 47
63 Ibid p 48
64 Gandhi M K *India of My Dreams* (compiled by R K Prabhu) p 69
65 Ibid p 79
* Compare Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda

of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by History as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils It has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul."[66] So he wanted to preserve the languages of India and to use them as sources of national regeneration Addressing the National University of Gujrat at Ahmedabad he affirmed that a systematic study of Asiatic culture was no less essential than the study of Western sciences and that the vast treasure of Sanskrit and Arabic, Persian and Pali and Magadhi had to be ransacked to discover wherein lay the source of strength for the nation Gandhi was no more revivalist and his ideal was not to feed on or repeat the ancient cultures, but to build a new culture based on the traditions of the past and enriched by the experience of later times His ideal was a synthesis of the different cultures that had come to stay in India, that had influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn, had themselves been influenced by the spirit of the soil [67]

Gandhi thus stood for real Swaraj not only in the political and economic sense, but also in the cultural sense He did not agree that the ideas of social service and social betterment had come to India from Christianity or the West, he held, on the other hand, that these ideas were indigenous to India. According to the Mahatma, it was a wrong notion that social service was best known and organised in Europe, nowhere social service was treated so much as a religious duty as in India Instances of this faculty of the Indian people could be found in the marvellous organisation of Kumbha mela at Hardwar and in thousands of pilgrims ascending the Himalayas up to Jamnotri, who were catered for without difficulty in a spirit of service The matchless caste organisation was an instance of vast social service organisation Quoting the opinion of W W Hunter, Gandhi would point

66 Ibid, pp 81-82
67 Tendulkar, D G, *Mahatma*, Vol II, p 29

out that India was remarkable for the absence of any need of the Poor Law that caste regulated service in the event of disease death and poverty and that social service was recognised in India as a duty [68]

These were then the social ideas of Gandhiji But he was no man of mere ideas he was primarily a man of intense action charged with uncommon energy [69] After his brilliant record of struggle against injustice—social political and racial—in South Africa Gandhi finally came to India in 1915 Gandhi made no political speeches during that year but he gave expression to his views on social reform On October 28 (1915) he began his campaign against indentured labour by delivering the first of the series of public lectures in Bombay [70] During this period of self imposed silence Gandhi only pointed out to the people their short-comings and carried on propaganda in favour of anti untouchability and Swadeshi [71] Brooding over the sad condition of his people he was pained to find that the common people were deprived of the fruits of the talents of their great country men Addressing the meeting at the opening ceremony of the Hindu University Benares Gandhi deplored that the researches of scholars like Bose and Ray were not the common property of the masses [72] He further gave a call for action and asserted that no amount of speeches would ever make Indians fit for self Government He laid stress on character building which alone would entitle them to self Government [73]

From the very beginning of his public life he himself had moulded his character on a particular pattern He practised

68 Tendulkar D G *Mahatma* Vol I p 326

69 Jawaharlal Nehru says that his call of action was two fold (1) action involved in challenging and resisting foreign rule (2) action which led the people to fight their own evils (*Discovery of India* p 430 Nehru further says that quietism is the Indian habit of mind but Gandhi has done more than anybody else to fight and change the quietism of the Indian people (Ibid p 431)

70 Tendulkar D G *Mahatma* Vol I p 216

71 Ibid p 219

72 Ibid p 221

73 Ibid p 222

what he preached, and while in South Africa he made his wife clean the pot of a Panchama who had been converted to Christianity though she had strenuously opposed the proposal [74] Similarly Gandhi wanted to admit an untouchable candidate to the Ashrama founded in 1915 at Ahmedabad, if the candidate fulfilled all other conditions [75] An untouchable family, Dudabhai, his wife Danibehn, and their daughter Lakshmi were admitted to the Ashrama This aroused stiff opposition to the institution and all monetary help was stopped [76] From the very beginning the Ashrama had *given no corner to untouchability.* But mostly it was the real orthodox Hindus who met the daily growing expenses of the Ashrama This was a clear indication that untouchability had been shaken to its very foundations* Interdining with the untouchables was also in vogue in the Ashrama.[77]

It is in Champaran, however, where Gandhi went on the invitation of a simple peasant to wipe off the stain of indigo, that we get a clear picture of Gandhi's method of carrying on humanitarian, political and social work at the same time Bihar, at that time, lacked in public spirit and public work. There was strict untouchability The enormity of the problem may be inferred from the fact that when Gandhi went to Rajendra Prasad's house at Patna on way to Motihari in Prasad's absence, he was not allowed to draw water from the well while servants were drawing water lest drops from his bucket might pollute them.[78] But the advent of Gandhi changed everything as if by magic In the words of Rajendra Prasad, "Bihar emerged as a hopeful, young province, ever growing from strength to strength, only after Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1917"[79] There was

74 Gandhi, M K, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p 277
75 Ibid, p 395
76 Ibid, p 397
* About the year 1915, Sitarammayya says that the year 1915 was a landmark in the political history of India (*The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol I, p 121)
77 Ibid, p 399
78 Ibid, p 406
79 Prasad, Dr Rajendra, *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar*, p. 2

appalling poverty there In the evening of April 14 1917 he visited a village in Champaran He entered the huts of some poor peasants and talked to little children and women He was convinced that India would get Swaraj only when the condition of these people improved[80] A more heart rending truth was revealed when Gandhi asked his wife Kasturbai to inquire why the village women did not wash their clothes When she spoke to them about it one woman took Kasturbai in her hut and said Look now there is no box or cupboard here containing other clothes The sari I am wearing is the only one I have How am I to wash it ? Tell Mahatmaji to get me another sari and I shall then promise to bathe and put on clean clothes every day[81]

Gandhi had come to Bihar not to bring about a social revolution but on a mission of enquiry But in course of his enquiry he found that he must bring about the amelioration of the peasantry if he wanted to have permanent effects There was colossal ignorance uncleanliness dirt in the villages dirt on the roads dirt everywhere the peasants had no capacity for organised work they could not repair a village road there were epidemics from which there was no remedy men and women gossipped and children were neglected[82] Gandhiji at once diagnosed the disease and in his characteristic way he began with reforming his co workers

At that time the social atmosphere in Bihar was feudal and Biharis were dependent on servants even for petty things so much so that the number of servants was double the number of Gandhiji's co workers These workers had rigid habit with regard to food etc and in spite of English education and residence at Calcutta they would take kachcha food (rice and dal) cooked only by a Brahman or a casteman[83]

Gandhiji brushed aside all that to avoid waste of time and expenses *on establishment* and Kayasthas Rajputs Agarwalas

80 Tendulkar D G *Mahatma* Vol I p 247
81 Ibid p 261
82 Tendulkar D G *Gandhi in Champaran* p 103
83 Prasad. Dr Rajendra *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar* p 25

Goalas and Gujrati Banias all began to eat rice and dal touched by others The services of servants were also dispensed with [84] Now 'Babus' (English-educated middle class people—mostly advocates) began to draw water for their use from the well, wash their own clothes after bath and their plates after meals, and clean the rooms [85]

After having impressed upon his co-workers the value of self-help, community life and dignity of labour, the next problem before Gandhi was the education of the village folk It was to be no conventional education, but an education leading to the integrated, all-round development of the individual So he wanted village schools where highly educated men and women would give voluntary service as teachers The school was to be a centre of light in the gloom of the village; the teacher was to be the friend, philosopher and guide to the men and women of the village [86] People were to be instructed not only in the three 'R's, but also in rural economy and sanitation.[87] The last would consist in keeping the village clean, teaching people not to dirty it by evacuating anywhere and everywhere, keeping the surroundings of the village-well clean, improving the drain of the village, sweeping the village roads, teaching the people proper methods of disposing off the refuse matter, teaching the women how to keep the children clean etc [88] For such work teachers of high culture were needed and Bihar having no such teachers, Gandhi brought them from Gujrat and Maharashtra [89] Workers who helped Gandhi work out his social programme in Bihar were—Sri Lakhi Narayan Sahu of Cuttack and his wife, Dr Hari Shri Kishna Deva, Shri Baban Gopal Gokhale and his wife Srimati Awantika Bai, Mahadeva Haribhai Desai, Narhari Dwarika Das Parikh, Brajlal Bhimji Roopani, Chhote Lal Jain, Surendra Jee, Bal Krishna Yogeshwar Purohit and Devdas

84 Ibid., p 26
85 Ibid , p 26
86 Ibid , p 29
87 Ibid , p 30
88 Ibid , p 30
89 Ibid , p 31

Gandhi from Sabarmati Ashrama, Sadashiva Lakshman Soman Pundalik Jee Appaji Eknath Basudev Khare Pranlal Prabhu Ram Yogi and Shanker Rao Deo Kasturba was assisted by Awantika Bai Manibehn Durgabehn Anandibai and Binapani Sahu[90]

Schools were started at Barharwa in charge of Baban Gokhale and his wife and Devdas Gandhi at Bhitharwa under Somanji and at Madhuban under Narhari Parikh Manibehn Mahadev Haribhai Desai and Durgabehn[91] These self less workers were ideal and did even the lowest work they would make the village road clean and smooth would sweep the private houses and the village road and would clean the surroundings of the village well[92] Special attention was paid to women by lady volunteers who entered into their houses and soon won their confidence Purdah seemed to be distinctly dissolving as even grown up women came to the Ashramas for instruction Women took to spinning reading writing and joined in village functions such as in Ramayan parties and in Ashrama prayers[93] Kasturba always moved among the village women and taught them hygiene and sanitation[94] The net result was that the volunteers with their schools sanitation work and medical relief gained the confidence and respect of the village folk and were able to bring good influence to bear upon them[95]

Gandhi could not remain in Champaran for long to complete his work of social reform which had been so earnestly begun The call of duty took him to other places His all embracing interest made him champion the cause of the mill hands at Ahmedabad But here also Gandhi s method was different from those of other reformers He believed in conducting strike on a higher plane And therefore his conditions of a successful strike were — never to resort to violence never

90 Ray Choudhury P C *Gandhiji s First Struggle in India* p 91
91 Ibid p 94
92 Prasad Dr Rajendra *Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar* p 31
93 Ibid p 32
94 Tendulkar D G *Gandhi in Champaran* p 110
95 Gandhi M K *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* p 423

to molest black legs, never to depend on alms, and to remain firm, no matter how long the strike continued, and to earn bread, during the strike, by any other honest labour[96] It was on these lines that Gandhi conducted the labour strikes at Ahmedabad and he succeeded to a very large extent.

But so long Gandhi had not been very active in Congress His real entrance into the Congress politics began with his participation in Congress proceedings at Amritsar. Attendance at previous Congresses were nothing more than an annual renewal of allegiance to the Congress[97] With the assumption of the membership of the Constitution Committee of the Congress, he really began to mould the shape of the Congress By this time the events on the Indian political scene were marching with kaleidoscopic speed, and Gandhi was at the helm of a mighty mass movement The soul of a great nation had been stirred and, thanks to the genius of Gandhi, the political upheaval was accompanied by a great social awakening also

Gandhi was impatient at that time for political emancipation, but he did so because he thought that there could be no social reconstruction without the achievement of freedom. Vindicating the Non-Cooperation movement for Swaraj when untouchability still waited to be removed, he said, "If as a member of a slave nation I could deliver the suppressed classes from their slavery without freeing myself from my own, I would do so to-day But it is an impossible task A slave has not the freedom even to do the right thing. Hence though the panchama problem is as dear to me as life itself, I rest satisfied with exclusive attention to national non-co-operation. I feel sure the greater includes the less."[98]

And that was really so All the items of social reform for which so long resolutions only had been passed and progress had been painfully slow, now received a great impetus Education on national lines spread with great rapidity In Calcutta Gandhi

96 Ibid, p 427

97. Ibid, p 486

98 Tendulkar, D.G, *Mahatma*, Vol II, p 8

opened the National College (February 1921) and national schools were started throughout Bengal He inaugurated the *Bihar Vidyapith* at Patna In less than four months national colleges were started in Patna Aligarh Ahmedabad Bombay *Benares and Delhi* There were national universities in Bengal Gujrat and Bihar The Jamia Millia Islamia or the National Muslim University was founded by the joint efforts of Gandhi and Mohamed Ali [99]

When political awakening reached its high watermark Hindus and Muslims vied with one another in demonstrations of fraternization Orthodox Hindus invited Muslim leaders to dine in their homes To crown all Muslim purdah women attended meetings and invited Gandhi to address them A unique spectacle was that Muslim leaders would go to these normally prohibited meetings with bandages on their eyes They made an exception in the case of Gandhi, because they said that he was pure enough to go anywhere and everywhere he liked Muslim women would not hesitate to have him in their midst [100]

In Gandhi's opinion the secret of Swaraj lay in the constructive programme He rivetted the attention of his followers on cultivating the spirit of non violence setting up Congress organisations in every village introducing the spinning wheel in every house promoting Hindu Muslim unity and ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying themselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs [101] Regarding the influence of the spinning wheel on the women and masses of India Gandhi said The womanhood and the masses of India have been awakened as never before at the call of the spinning wheel The masses recognise in it the giver of life *The women regard* it as the protector of chastity Every widow has recognised in the wheel a dear forgotten friend [102]

99 Ibid p 44
100 Ibid p 45
101 Ibid p 45
102 Ibid p 51

It was this attachment on Gandhi's part to the spinning wheel which made him resort to the bonfire of foreign cloth. This foreign cloth had deprived the millions in India of one of their most important sources of income. Naturally Gandhi had advocated and practised the bonfire of foreign cloth which drew a strong protest from his friend and admirer Andrews, "I was supremely happy when you were dealing great giant blows at the great fundamental moral evils, drunkenness, drug-taking, untouchability, race arrogance, etc., and when you were, with such wonderful and beautiful tenderness, dealing with the hideous vice of prostitution" But Andrews expressed strong disapproval of the bonfire of foreign cloth.[103]

Gandhi had been extremely moved by the appaling poverty of the masses of India, and he believed he could carry any message of reform—religious, political or social—to them only through bread. In reply to Tagore's criticism of his programme, he wrote, "To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages."[104] Again he said, "I have found it impossible to soothe the suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—the invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it themselves. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow"[105]

Equally efficacious was Gandhi's non-violent struggle in improving the condition of women. Referring to it Rajkumari Amrit Kaur wrote that of all the factors contributing to the awakening of women in India none had been so potent as the field of non-violent action which Gandhiji offered to women in his 'war' against British domination of India "It brought them out in their hundreds from their sheltered homes to stand the furnace of a fiery trial without flinching"[106]

Referring to the eradication of the evils of drink, drug and

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103 Ibid, p 73
104 Ibid, p 84
105. Ibid, p 87
106 Rajkumari Amrit Kaur in her Introduction to M K Gandhi's, *Women and Social Injustice in India*, p VI

gambling Bhartan Kumarappa wrote that under Gandhi s leadership the Indian National Congress included prohibition of liquor and opium as part of the Non Co operation Movement of 1920 22 and that Gandhiji made use of the network of Congress organisations throughout the country to carry on his crusade against drink and drugs and to urge prohibition of these on the Government The result was that Congress men and women rallied to his support hindered auctioning of licences to liquor dealers and picketed such liquor shops This country wide agitation prompted many persons to give up drink and liquor revenue fell rapidly [107] Gandhi did not believe in bringing about moral reforms through prohibition because he stressed that such reforms must come from within and he held that they could not be enforced from without through law So by prohibition he hoped not to prevent people from drinking but to prevent the sale of liquor and drugs so as to remove temptation from the way of the addict He believed that helpless victims of drink needed to be helped against themselves and saved from the evil effects on the drunkard and the misery and poverty it brought to their family Passing by an open liquor shop they would go in and indulge themselves So he insisted on the Government closing down liquor shops [108]

But the Government was out to suppress the movement for prohibition in 1920 1921 It resorted to violence in Dharwad Panic striken a police officer ordered to fire on an unarmed crowd Gandhi decried education supported by a revenue derived from an immoral source He considered it wrong to wait for devising methods of tapping other sources of revenue before giving up the revenue from drink [109] During the hurricane temperance campaign (1920 21) many of the liquor dens were practically closed and hundreds of opium dens in Assam were deserted But the tragedy was that Government

107 Kumarappa Bhartan in his Editor s Note to M K Gandhi s *Drink Drugs and Gambling* p IV

108 Ibid pp IV V

1 9 Gandhi M K *Drink Drugs and Gambling* p 5

repression came heavy on the people, because Government revenue dwindled down in Bihar, Assam, and the Central Provinces. The political movement also developed into a movement of self-purification, and there was an onrush of feeling, a desire and a yearning for self-purification Thousands of workers became volunteers to picket liquor shops and opium dens and the people also began to believe that it was their duty to desert the drinking booths But the Government let loose its engines of oppression, and thousands of volunteers were thrown into jails for the offence of picketing drink and drug shops [110]

Giving his presidential address to the Belgaum Congress (1924), Gandhi again emphasized that liquor and opium traffic were items of national importance. But he deplored that the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance did not last. The picketing degenerated into violence, and so it was abandoned and liquor-shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But the ray of hope was that temperance work was not dead altogether, and there were workers still continuing their quiet and self-less service in the cause of temperance Gandhi was convinced that Indians would not be able to eradicate the evil till they had Swaraj.[111]

S Srinivasa Iyengar, President of the Gauhati Congress (1926), admitted that the measures (for the removal of social evils) adopted during the active period of Non-co-operation were marked by temporary exaltation, but no permanent progress took place. Nevertheless, he realised the change that had occurred in the nature of social reform when he said, "The removal of untouchability was long confined to the platform of social or religious reform and did not then make rapid progress By making it one of the items of the constructive programme of the Congress, we have, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, almost in the twinkling of an eye materially changed the attitude towards it alike of the educated classes and of the masses." But

110 Ibid, p 29 30
111 *Congress Presidential Addresses* (1911-1935, p 750

her years, problems of social change have been and continue to be enormous and complicated Hoary tradition and social and religious complexes constitute a back log of history which can not be easily cleared And Gandhi was at the same time conservative and revolutionary—he did not for example deny the moral validity of the institution of the rich as such though he sought to change the nature of its working and ultimately even to eliminate it His main contribution thus was not so much in the sphere of bringing about actual and far reaching reform as in rousing social consciousness about the necessity of such change [119]

Gandhi s success was that he carried the masses with him Before him the reformers had often been alienated from the people that was the fate of the Brahmo Samaj of the Prarthana Samaj and the social reformers even the Arya Samaj the Theosophical Society and Swami Vivekananda could appeal only to a limited audience Just as in politics so in the sphere of social reform Gandhi carried the nation with him In this connection the findings of J Natarajan are revealing He says that Gandhi s influence on Gujrati journalism made itself felt soon after he took over the Navjivan from Sri Indulal Yajnik and converted it from a monthly to a weekly He preached in simple yet forceful language the philosophy of truth non violence and civil disobedience He advocated the uplift of the depressed inter caste marriages and Hindu Muslim unity Gandhi s achievement was that he advocated social reform and yet gained popularity for his paper with the result that the *Gujrati* of Bombay and the *Gujrati Punch* of Ahmedabad strongly orthodox papers which had seen many reformist rivals off the field rapidly declined in popularity The circulation of the Navjivan shot up from 9000 in 1919 to 20 000 in 1920 [120]

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119 Mukherjee Hiren op cit p 197

120 Natarajan J *History of Indian Journalism* p 18

TWELVE

Conclusion

In view of what has been discussed in the foregoing chapters, it can now be concluded that Nationalism and the Social Reform Movement went side by side, each reacting upon, and influencing the nature and character of the other.[1] As the character of our nationalism underwent transformation, so the social reform movement also took a different turn. From Ram Mohan Roy to Gokhale, the liberal tradition in India was based largely on Western rationalism and individualism and the impetus for social emancipation also came from the West.[2]

The liberal school had faith in the benevolent nature of the British Empire and it considered the Raj as a *sine qua non* of all progress—social, cultural and political. Regarding the Western influence on Indian social and religious life, Mr. Sankaran Nair, President of the Congress in 1897, said, "Great as is the necessity of British Rule for the political emancipation of our country, even greater is the necessity for social and religious reform."[3] He proceeded, "To break down the isola-

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1 S N Banerjea, says, "Our political activities are reacting upon our social system, and the upward movement, with occasional abberations, is visible along the entire line." (S N Banerjea, *A Nation in Making*, p 28)

2 M A Buch in his book '*Rise of Indian Liberalism*' discusses social liberalism and then shows that political liberalism was an adjunct of that social liberalism In the list of liberals he gives prominent place to Ram Mohan Roy, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale

3 *Congress Presidential Addresses*, Vol I, p. 323

tion of the Hindu religion to remove the barriers which now
prevent free social intercourse and unity of action to extend the
blessings of education to the lower clas es to improve the
position of women to one of equality to men we require the
continuance of a strictly secular Government in thorough sym
pathy with liberal thought and progress [4] Mr Nair found
Hinduism too hide bound and conservative to be the vehicle of
progressive ideas and way of life He said Hinduism is oppos
ed to liberty of thought and action which is essential to progress
Orthodox opposition has been uncompromising in regard to
every step hitherto taken by Government in favour of such
liberty Such being the case progress of India is dependent
upon the emancipation of its thought from spiritual bondage [5]

Mr Nair s frame of mind is reminiscent of the mental
condition of the first fruits of English education in India who
saw good in everything English and decried everything Indian
They were violently pro British They could see no flaw in the
civilization and culture of the West They were charmed by its
novelty and its strangeness The enfranchisement of the indivi
dual the substitution of the right of private judgment in place
of traditional authority the exaltation of duty over custom all
came with the force and suddenness of a revelation to an Oriental
people who knew no more binding obligation than the mandate
of immemorial usage and of venerable tradition [6]

Liberals like Sankaran Nair were still under the spell of
Western culture Their political ambition was to enjoy the fruits
of British citizenship and they took pride in the Empire To

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4 Ibid p 324

5 I S R Vol XXII, p 140
Mr Nair s this criticism of Hinduism was considered unjust by many
people Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar for example held that in pite of
its faults Hinduism had built up a social fabric that had stood firm and
unshaken amid the wrecks of nations and the storms of fate It is
reckless writings like Mr Nair s which are made use of by our politi al
opponents who attack Hinduism in the columns of the *Times* with the
deliberate object of discrediting our political movement
(*Congress Presidential Addresses* Vol II p 49)

6 Banerjea S N op cit p 308

them representative institutions were a consecrated possession, which in the counsels of Providence had been entrusted to the English people, to guard that possession, to spread it, and not to make it the property of this people or that people, but the heritage of mankind at large. England was, they held, the home of representative institutions; and from England as the centre representative institutions had spread far and wide and she had justly been called the august mother of free nations. They owned that the people of India were the children of that mother, and they claimed their birth-right to be admitted into the rights of British citizens and British fellow subjects.[7] Addressing the Ahmedabad Congress (1902) as its President, Banerjea reiterated that the Congress had no higher aspirations than that they should be admitted into the great confederacy of self-governing states of which England was the august mother. He admitted that the journey towards the goal must necessarily be slow, and that the blessed consummation could be attended only after prolonged preparation and laborious apprenticeship. But he pleaded a beginning to be made[8] Banerjea was even more enthusiastic while addressing the Calcutta Rotary Club (in the year 1919) which comprised only Europeans, "The Empire is yours, but it is also ours It is yours by creation, ours by adoption. You are the natural heirs; we are the adopted children of the Empire Your status and our status are the same; and here let me make a frank confession of faith on my behalf as well as the great party to which I belong We of the Moderate party believe that the connexion of England with India is a divine dispensation ordained for the holiest and highest of ends. Therefore, do I appeal to you, representatives of the European Community, members of the Empire, friends of human freedom to stand by us, to co-operate with us "[9]

The social ideals of liberalism have been very nicely put forth in a leading article of the *Indian Social Reformer*, "It

7 Ibid , p 116

8 Ibid , p 314

9 Ibid , p 336

would be well if those who seek the solution of present day Indian problems by means of revivalistic movements would bear in mind a few things of practical interest The first and most obvious of these is the relation of their movements to the nationalistic tendencies stimulated and fostered by a knowledge of modern history Even as among Hindus themselves the revivalistic movements do not seem to touch the real issues They are all revivals of the philosophies of Hinduism but the strength of orthodox Hinduism that which gives it its enormous stability is not its philosophy, but rather its psychology Hinduism in its social structure of which the ground plan is the caste system displays a profound knowledge of human weaknesses and how they might be best used to ensure the stability of its rule The revivalist movements have a certain value as being calculated to diffuse a knowledge of the profound speculations of our ancestors among their descendants of the present day but as an effective national force they can not be counted to yield substantial results there are many schools of Hindu metaphysics there is only one social philosophy for all the social philosophy embodied in the caste system Whatever evil consequences have flowed to the country in the past it has been on account of this erroneous social philosophy and not on account of the metaphysical diversities of higher Hinduism Everybody knows what that social philosophy is It is based on privilege It teaches a doctrine of unnatural contentment It deprives life of large motives Life and death in its hands become mere matters of routine It takes hold of a person at birth and till his ashes mingle with the dust it gives him not a moment of freedom In return of this life long subordination the Hindu is allowed the precious satisfaction of looking down upon another Hindu as belonging to a caste lower than his own Orthodox Hinduism on its practical and social side is non ethical to the extent that it is a customary creed The new movement should be distinctly individual and ethical

The Hindu revivalistic movements fail in not recognising that the regenerating movement must necessarily have a militant

side Every great movement of social reform has its two-fold aspect Intellectually it is a fulfilment of the past, because in thought there is only growth, and no conflict But, at a given time, only a modicum of the current thought of a community enters in its environment, and every effort to apply fresh doses of it is resisted with the resistance of the mass of circumstances which comprises environment. Thus it always happens that while the philosophy of history is a continuous body of ideas, the events of history seem often to come in an antagonistic series Every reformer who is also a thinker feels this dual position in his own life it (Hinduism) has only one theory of society; and the latter is based on a study of human weaknesses. The movement of reform has to oppose uncompromisingly a truer and nobler social philosophy to this narrow and misguided one The orthodox social philosophy proceeds on the assumption that a man's weaknesses are a more stable and reliable foundation of society than his aspirations The social philosophy of India should proceed on precisely the contrary assumption It should never appeal to men's weaknesses, their vanities, their love of pleasure or of fame, and worst weakness of all, their love of repose In this regard we have to learn a great deal from countries where public life has been more free, more active and more real than in India The history of the progressive countries of Europe presents a remarkable contrast to that of India in this respect There they repressed beliefs, but allowed liberty of conduct to a much larger extent, here we encouraged the widest intellectual divergence, but repressed conduct The greatest want of time is a larger measure of personal freedom But men are afraid that personal freedom will be abused That is because we have been brought up under a regimen of distrust and suspicions Experience shows that there is a good deal more of licence under the guise of orthodoxy than in the exercise of the rights of freedom "[10]

It was this love of foreign ideals and crusade against orthodoxy which had stood in the way of the liberal social reformers

10 I S R , Vol XIII, p 525

and alienated them from the masses That is why despite their high social idealism they failed to make any effective impact on the people In due time there was bound to come a reaction with a sudden rush And from the adoration of all things Western, there was a movement by the eighties of the nineteenth century calling people back to their ancient civilization There had always been an under current of this movement and during the Mutiny (?) of 1857 it has even manifested itself [11] But the English educated community had kept itself generally aloof from the main current of Indian life The historic task of bridging the gulf between the educated few and the general people was accomplished by the almost illiterate Paramahansa Ram Krishna deo and his English educated disciple Swami Vivekananda by Swami Dayananda who was well versed in the Vedic literature and his Arya Samaj and by the eclectical Theosophical Society and Annie Besant Because of their shedding off of the inferiority complex their belief in the spiritual heritage and mission of India their emphasis on self assertion these people have been misunderstood by certain writers as having encouraged social conservatism though they have been accepted as having given impetus to political radicalism [12] We have seen however that the revivalists were not social conservatives [13] Rather they were ardent nationalists who wanted to welcome other countries on

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11 The nationalist ideas behind the revolt of 1857 according to the Extremists were Swadharma and Swaraj (M A Buch *Rise and Growth of Indian Militant Nationalism* p 2) There was in tin tive attachment to native culture native religion and native policy Ibid p 16)

12 M A Buch for example regarding the Tilak S hool as a good running commentary on the limitations of the earlier Liberal School of Gokhale considers it a bridge between the earlier school of cultural nationalism of Davananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda and the later Gandhi School of Ind an politics (Ibid preface) In India political radi alism and social conserva Buch says further tism have gone to some extent hand in hand The School of new nationalism which rears its head prominently from 1 05 is a mixture of this type It connects itself on the one hand with the forces whi h expressed themsel es in the Mutiny of 1857 against Brit h Government and on the other hand with the movements of rel gious and social revi al started by Swami Dayananda and Swami Vi ekananda (Ibid p 1)

13 Cf Chap III

terms of equality and self-respect. Swami Vivekananda was a universalist and Dayananda[14] believed and tried to establish that the Vedas were the fountain-head of all knowledge, spiritual as well as secular. So it was shameful for Indians to go to other peoples for the enrichment of their culture.

The Liberals had derived their initial inspiration from English liberalism, from Mill, Morley and others, and they believed in the formulae of liberalism as in the Gospel. They had implicit faith in Rationalism, Enlightenment and Progress under the aegis of England They earnestly believed that the salvation of India lay in the immediate, or almost immediate, establishment of free representative institutions, popularly elected parliaments, municipalities etc and their attitude to the Old Indian World, the old religions, beliefs and ways of living was generally depreciatory

The Extremist Party naturally turned its back to such a servile position and got its impetus from the desire to get from shams to realities and the necessity of suffering and self-sacrifice for the achievement of national salvation So they became antipathetic to the Liberals[15] To the Extremists emancipation meant something much wider and deeper than politics To them it was a matter of building up a national character, of reenvigorating all departments of life They thought that a trial of strength between the two peoples was inevitable, and so they argued that a new Indian people must be made.[16]

Not only they turned away from the political liberalism of

14 Dayananda had realised the utter futility of making any progress under foreign rule, "When a country falls on evil days the natives have to bear untold misery and suffering Say what you will, the Swadeshiya Rajya (indigenous native rule) is by far the best A foreign Government, perfectly free from religious prejudices, impartial towards all the native and foreigners alike, kind, beneficent and just to the natives alike their parents though it may be, can never render the people perfectly happy "
(Satyarth Prakash—Chapter VIII) Quoted in Swami Shraddhananda's '*Inside Congress*',

15 Bevan, Edwyn, *Indian Nationalism*, p 99

16 Ibid , p 112

the Moderates they also eschewed their Rationalism and secularism and looked to India's old religious tradition The ardent nationalists demanded a revival of Hinduism, and the delivery of India not only from the political control of the foreigner but also from the corroding infidelity which the foreigners brought with them India must not only shake off the alien Government she must regain her soul as well

No doubt Hindu revivalism was a reaction against dry and rootless rationalism an outbreak of the human spirit from confinement a longing for growth in keeping with the national spirit But it was no uncritical admiration of everything archaic and quaint in symbol and ritual and belief, no victory of conservatism no pose A more correct and sympathetic appraisal of the movement has been given by one of the high priests of revivalist nationalism He says The Nationalist Movement had been preceded by a general religious and social revival in India This revival came as a reaction* against the earlier movements of religious and social revolt raised admittedly under the influence of European thoughts and ideas This revolt was the direct result of the application of the canons of the dominant rationalistic thought of Europe of the later eighteenth and the early nineteenth century to the social and religious life of India It represented what may be called the outer movement of the modern Indian consciousness It was soon followed by necessary return movement The movement of social and religious revival which preceded the present Nationalist Movement represented really the return of the national consciousness to itself It was not really a conflict between the progressive and conservative elements of Indian society as superficial

* Compare Sitaramayya One feature however of this reformist movement was a certain disregard for the past and a spirit of revolt from the time honoured and traditional beliefs of the country which arose from an undue glamour presented by the Western institutions and heightened greatly by the political prestige associated with them Naturally then there was bound to be a reaction at any rate a correction to the denationalising tendencies engendered by the reformist movement (*The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol I p 13)

observers have tried to make it out, but a conflict between aggressive European and progressive Indian culture. It was India's mental and moral protest against the intellectual and ethical domination of Europe In some sense, it was really the reflex action of the growing appreciation of Eastern, specially Hindu, thoughts and ideals in Europe and America.* Just as foreign Christian missions have very materially helped to develop self-consciousness of the Christian nations, as civilisers of the world and benefactors of humanity even so the Hindu and Buddhistic missionary activities in Europe and America have revealed India's place in the evolution of modern world-culture. All these worked together to create a new pride of race, and in this pride of race was really born the new National spirit in the country. By all these various means the old hypnotism was slowly breaking away. What was needed was only the bold declaration of the new political ideal to complete this work The Nationalist school came into being, as a new political party in India, with such a declaration."[17]

This reaction against Western domination became more balanced as India gained more self-confidence In Gandhi there was the commingling of the brighter side of both liberal nationalism and extremist nationalism He would ask both the Moderates and the Extremists to work on a higher plane for the emancipation—social, political and spiritual—of India. He would serve both of them He would say to the Extremists that the Home Rule they wanted for India could not be had for their asking, and that everyone would have to take it for himself; because what others would get for anybody would not be Home Rule, but foreign rule So, Gandhi would impress, it would not be proper for them to say that they had obtained Home Rule merely by expelling the English, rather everyone must gain complete self-control to get true Swarajya.[18] To the Moderates

* For a detailed account of this subject Cf Alex Aronson's *Europe Looks at India*'

17 Pal, B C, *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism*, pp 43 44

18 Gandhi, M K, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, p 71

Gandhi would say that mere petitioning was derogatory and confession of inferiority only a denial of the Godhead No body or nothing Gandhi would say was indispensable except God and stating that for the time being the presence of the English in India was a necessity would make them conceited He would ask them not to suppose that India would be widowed if the English left India bag and baggage It might be he would concede that those who were forced to observe peace under the British pressure would fight after their withdrawal But Gandhi saw no advantage in suppressing an eruption which must have its vent So if Indians must fight among themselves before they could remain at peace he thought that it was better that they did so immediately There should be no occasion for a third party to protect the weak It was this so called protection which had unnerved Indians and had made the weak weaker Unless they realised it they could not have Home Rule[19] Gandhi would prefer anarchy under Home Rule to orderly foreign rule Indians must learn and teach others that they did not want the tyranny of either English rule or Indian rule[0]

He had no animosity against the English and he would allow them to stay in India as the servants of the people and to act up to their (the peoples) wish He would allow them if they would to police India but they were not to derive any commercial benefit from her Gandhi would say to the English hat the civilization that they supported was the very reverse of ivilization and that the Indian civilization was far superior to heirs The English, therefore should live in India as Indians nd do nothing contrary to the Indian religions They should schew beef and avoid bacon and ham The English schools nd law courts were useless so they were to be replaced by ncient Indian schools and courts Communication was to be nade in the national language which was to be Hindi (the most ommon language in India) and not English and the English ,ere therefore to learn Hindi[1]

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3 Pal B C *The Spirit of Indian Nationalism* pp 43-44

) Ibid p 72

1 Ibid p 72 It is instructive to remember how the march of events had

Gandhi's ire was against the modern civilization itself. He thought that that part of India, which had not been contaminated by the cursed modern civilization, was still as noble as in the past The inhabitants of that part of India would laugh at the newfangled notions of the moderns The English did not rule over them, nor could those under the spell of European civilization rule over them. The so-called educated people, Gandhi remarked, did not know those masses in whose name they spoke, nor did the masses know them So the lovers of the Motherland should go into the interior which had not yet been polluted Gandhi considered those who wanted to bring Western civilization to the masses enemies of the country and sinners.[22] It could be argued against India, however, that she suffered from many social evils, that there were hundreds of thousands of child-widows, that two years' old babies were married, twelve year old girls were mothers and housewives, women practised polyandry, the practice of *Niyoga* obtained, and in the name of religion girls dedicated themselves to prostitution and sheep and goats were killed [23] Gandhi would say in defence of the Indian civilization that the above-mentioned defects were accepted as defects to be removed and nobody would accept them for ancient civilization Under the new spirit, he hoped, those evils would be purged out [24] But the tragedy with modern civilization was that its emblems were accepted as such by its votaries.[25]

The critics might point out that if the Indian civilization was good and great, it should not have declined Every civilization had to face a period of trial, Gandhi would reply, and it was then that its capacity to survive was tested The Indian civilization, had, no doubt, been placed in jeopardy, but its

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made full circle since Ram Mohan Roy who advocated Western education through the medium of English, the institution of Western schools and courts and even the colonization of India by Europeans for the improvement of Indian morals and culture

22 Ibid , p 45

23 Ibid

24 Ibid.

25. Ibid , p 46

strength was to be seen in its ability to survive the shock Moreover, it was not the whole of India which had been emasculated but only those affected by Western civilization had become enslaved It was the enslavement and abject condition of the educated few which made them think that the whole country was under slavery [26] So the Swaraj Gandhi wanted was no mere replacement of English rule by Indian rule even if the Indian might be a carbon copy of the English but the liberation of the individual in the true sense of the term He said Swaraj that I wish to picture is such that after we have once realised it we shall endeavour to the end of our life time to persuade others to do likewise [27] So there was no necessity for having as goal the expulsion of the English Those English who had been Indianised might be accommodated but there could be no room for them in India with their civilization [28]

What Gandhi wanted was not only political freedom but also social freedom His patriotism did not teach him that he should allow his people to be crushed under the heel of the Indian Princes if only the English retired Rather if he had power he was to resist the tyranny of Indian Princes just as much as that of the English By patriotism Gandhi meant the welfare of the whole people and if he could secure it at the hands of the English he would bow down his head to them [29]

But this Gandhian attitude was no isolated movement It was part of a world wide reaction that had grown out of the weariness with the Western civilization in the West itself Tolstoy was in the fore front of this resurgence He found in the work of Gandhi hope for the whole of mankind Tolstoy wrote to Gandhi on receiving his book *Indian Home Rule*, I have read your book with great interest because I think the question you have therein dealt with is important not only for Indians but for the whole of mankind [30] Gandhi was convinced that India

26 Ibid p 46
27 Ibid
28 Ibid p 47
29 Ibid p 49
30 Tolstoy in a letter to Gandhi (8th May 1910) reproduced in Kalidas Nag s *Tolstoy and Gandhi* (p 67)

which was the nursery of the great faiths of the world, would cease to be nationalist India, whatever else she might become, when she went through the process of civilization in the shape of reproduction on that sacred soil of gun factories and the hateful industrialism which had reduced the people of Europe to a state of slavery, and all but stifled among them the best instincts which were the heritage of the human family [31]

Of all the three nationalisms—Liberal, Extremist and Gandhian—the last proved most effective with regard to social reform The first did not satisfy the new spirit that came over the nation during the last decade of the nineteenth century The second was too much political to attach equal importance to social reform But the third combined politics with social reform and made ethical religion the basis of all progress—social as well as political And in a country like India such a synthesis proved very effective In India social problem is closely associated with religious considerations and the hold of religion is so strong that it is difficult to bring about social reform in the teeth of religious opposition.[32] "Thus the social reformer in India has to fight against forces believed to be semi-divine in their character, and more or less invulnerable against the commonplace and mundane weapons or expediency and common sense This feeling transmitted through generations, had assumed the complexion of a deep-seated instinct. It is against a social edifice, resting upon traditional instinct and reinforced by religious conviction, that the religious reformer has to fight "[33] So only a Great one, a Buddha or a Chaitanya, can make the Hindus accept social reform [34] In modern times a Ramakrishna, a Dayananda and a Vivekananda paved the way for the acceptance of social reform. Gandhi carried the movement irresistibly forward. He had the halo of a Great Soul (Mahatma), the self-sacrificing and self-immolating spirit of a patriot and infinite

31 M K Gandhi in his Introduction to Tolstoy's '*A Letter to a Hindu*' Reproduced in Ibid , p 79

32 Banerjea, S N , *A Nation in Making*, p 396

33 Ibid , p 396

34 Ibid , p 396

compassion for the socially handicapped and neglected

Thus no phase of Indian nationalism was socially reactionary It is true that every phase of social reform followed different paths and ideals the liberal phase was too much under western influence as was the case with that school of nationalism the extremist or revivalist or nationalist was too independent and national in keeping with the new spirit and the Gandhian was the synthesis of the two as was the case with Gandhian nationalism Gandhi was both a conservative and a revolutionary a nationalist and an internationalist a rationalist as well as a man of faith an ardent individualist and at the same time a true socialist So in matters of social reform also he held very advanced views which would leave even the most ardent social reformer in the West miles behind but at the same time he would not break with the past traditions of his country and would carry the masses with him He would speak the language of the people so that they might understand and follow him That explains why the Gandhian flood washed away the debris of ages

How the period 1885 to 1920 was important from the viewpoint of social reform when our nationalism also was having a stronger hold on the mind of the people would be evident from a review of the social progress registered during the period

In September 1909 the *Indian Social Reformer* noted with satisfaction the changes which had come over public opinion in matters of social reform during the past twenty years Twenty years before the attitude of educated Indians towards the small band of social reformers wavered between ridicule and opposition by 1909 they were all social reformers Sea voyage and the remarriage of young widows—two of the most actively opposed reforms—had been accepted as necessary and just by the consensus of educated opinion The education of girls had like wise ceased to be opposed and in the opinion of the *Indian Social Reformer* the progress of this important branch of education would have been greater if Government or local bodies had pro

vided more facilities The public were prepared to send girls to schools provided they were not too far away, had women teachers in the higher standards, and did not levy prohibitive fees The marriageable age of both boys and girls had appreciably risen in most parts of the country, owing to economic causes, the spread of education and growing ideas of social reform. It was a gratifying feature of the times that even among the most rigidly orthodox there was a disposition to moderate to a large extent the rigour of the discipline which custom had consecrated in the treatment of Hindu widows. To sum up, the position of women, in general, had become one of greater dignity both in the household and in society during the the past quarter of a century, and Indian women had fully risen to the height of their opportunity The workers among the depressed classes had been members of the Brahmo and Prarthana Samajas and of the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society, and they had also tried to enlist the practical sympathy and support of the leaders of the political movement [35]

Again in the year 1915, the *Indian Social Reformer* remarked with pride that the position of social reform was very different from what it had been twenty-five years ago. Now there was much more of action in conformity with profession All were, more or less, social reformers by 1915. There was a much larger number of educated women, and their influence was beginning to be felt in all social movements The question of foreign travel had ceased to exist The age of marriage of girls was steadily rising and several adult marriages had taken place by that time. In fact, it might be said that the reformers connected with the education and amelioration of the position of women had made considerable headway during the past twenty-five years. Social reform had entered a new and larger phase The question of caste was attracting increasing attention. The movement for the elevation of the depressed classes was a sign of the times The spirit of social service was penetrating

35 I S R , Vol XX, pp 14-15

Indian society [36]

After 1915 we reach the threshold of the Gandhian era in Indian History Indian nationalism henceforth entered into a stormy sea but the all pervasive insight of Gandhi never lost the perspective of the importance of social reform to national life and what had formerly been confined to a few now under his leadership covered the whole nation

Before we conclude it is proper to dispel certain misconceptions that have cropped up with regard to certain things One such misconception is that the Theosophical Society was reactionary and obscurantist The *Indian Social Reformer* remarked Another duty which the new school of reform was called upon to discharge, was in connection with the obscurantist reactionary propaganda of the Theosophists The establishment of the Theosophical Society was a godsend to the reactionaries who were being driven steadily from their strongholds of unreason The Society has now (1915) taken up Social Reform but the fact must be admitted that it put new obstacles in the way of the reformers [37] We have already examined that what the Theosophical Society did and preached was a necessary corrective to the over Westernisation of Indian youth and in no way opposed to genuine social reform Annie Besant had always advocated reform on national lines With the passage of time when the fascination of educated Indians for things European gradually wore off she became all the more vocal for social reform and mercilessly castigated orthodoxy which stood in the way of reform Writing in her *New India* in 1915 she declared Abuses die hard I have been speaking no less vigorously against child marriage for the last twenty years in India but have won little practice from the big audiences that have given me plenty of applause There is some progress being made And the seed has to grow for some time underground before it shoots up above the water has to accumulate for long behind an obstacle before it is strong enough to wash it away, and your

36 I S R Vol XXV p 617
37 I.S R Vol XXV p 61<

efforts and mine, and all the efforts of faithful workers in the land are none of them lost, but go on increasing the pressure against evil more and more, until at last that evil shall be washed away "[38]

Closely connected with this is another wrong notion that under the influence of the revivalist movements the educated middle class became socially reactionary. Some went to the length of saying that English education had done nothing to stimulate the educated classes to social reform. *The Times of India* (on the 18th December, 1887), for example, remarked, "The educated Hindu is represented as still clinging to the customs and beliefs of his superstitious ancestors without having faith in them He observes the rules of caste, still gives his infant daughters in marriage, and is still afraid of raising his hand against enforced widowhood."[39] It was believed that even an educated and enlightened Hindu could be forced to move out of customs only through legislative force [40] It was further alleged that Hindus educated in colleges opposed widow marriage and denounced female education, arguing that women were not to be educated but were to bear children. They denounced the Hindu reformer as mean, hypocritical and dishonest who spoke and wrote in favour of reform only to secure the good grace of influential Europeans European philanthrophists engaged in Indian social uplift were asked to mind the business of their own societies Pandita Ramabai was denounced as trying to provide an asylum not for Hindu widows but a home for herself [41]

But really speaking English education aimed among other things at enabling educated men to contribute to the moral and social improvement of the masses It was the firm conviction of Chandavarkar that forces let loose by English education were working indirectly and secretly, and silently producing beneficial effects, and furthering in a way the cause of social reform among Hindus [42] To tell the truth, there was no real reaction and the

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38 From *New India* reproduced in I S R, Vol XXV, p 566
39 Quoted in N G Chandavarkar's *Speeches*, p 2
40 Ibid, p 2
41. From *the Times of India*, Ibid, p 3
42 Ibid, p. 7

so called educated reactionaries among the Hindus were in spite of themselves feeling the need of progress and wished to show that it was they who were the true reformers [43]

In fact if there was any reaction it was not against social reform as such but against those who were over enamoured of British rule and considered it as the inevitable condition of social progress It was the protest of national spirit against the Christian missionaries the Anglicised liberals and men like Malabari [44] who saw nothing but virtue in the continuance of British rule

Progress in one field is naturally followed by progress in other fields there may be difference of emphasis but there can be no real conflict The observations of a man who was a witness to a nation in making are worth quoting in this respect The Swadeshi movement did not come into birth with the agitation for the reversal of the Partition of Bengal It was synchronous with the national awakening which the political movement in Bengal had created The human mind is not divided into watertight compartments but is a living organism and when a new impulse is felt in one particular direction it affects the whole organism and it manifest throughout the entire sphere of human activities When the Congress movement was started in the early eighties of the last century it was and is even now, a common enough remark among a certain class of writers perhaps not friendly to Indian interests that it would have been far better and a more natural course to have commenced with the vital problems of social reform than with political considerations which might have been more usefully dealt with later on after our social and domestic institutions had been placed on a better and more satisfactory footing * The whole course of

43 Introduction to N G Chandavarkar's *Speeches* p 1

44 R P Karkaria the biographer of B M Malabari says Malabari's great object is the regeneration of his country under the peaceful sway of Britain R P Karkaria *India Forty Years of Progress and Reform* p 117

* Auckland Colvin for example criticised the Congress for laying claim to representing the majority of the people for not devoting itself to social reform and for demanding representative institutions

our national evolution has belied this confident assertion. Social reform, industrial revival, moral and spiritual uplift have all followed in the track of the great national awakening which had its roots in the political activities of our leaders. Once again the truth was established that all reforms are interlinked and interdependent, and that they act and react upon one another, and strengthen one another by their mutual interaction. The activities of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar helped Keshub Chunder Sen by enabling him to appeal to instincts and tendencies broadened by the spirit of reform His work, in its turn, helped that of Kristo Das Pal and others, and the new schools of politicians fresh from their contact with the West, familiar with Western methods and imbued with the Western spirit, left the beaten track and extended the scope of their work by direct appeals to the educated community and even to the masses. The new ideals and the new methods moved the people, and imparted to them an impulse that bore fruit in the manifold activities of an awakended national life[45]

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unfamiliar to the vast masses and unsuited to Indian conditions (Dr Hiralal Singh, *Problems and Policies of the British in India* (1885-1898), pp 230-231)

Lord Dufferin in his speech at St Andrews' dinner, 30th November, 1888, remarked that the adoption of democratic methods in India would be "a big jump into the unknown," that the Congress was 'a microscopic minority' which could not be allowed to control the administration, that the Congress should have devoted its attention to such matters as excessive and useless expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies, the chronic indebtedness of the peasantry to the money-lenders, sanitary reforms, the reforms of the bad customs of Hindu society, and the problem of overpopulation and excessive pressure on the land He wanted the Congress to supply the Government with valuable information about social and religious questions (Ibid , p 232)

In 1888, certain members of the aristocracy also denounced the political character of the Congress Rajah Udai Pratap Singh, for example, of Bhinga held that the real subjects pressing for solution were social problems, which the Congress leaders had neither the energy nor the moral courage to take up The Maharaja of Benares also held the same view The Raja of Bhinga even accused Congressmen of encouraging the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1893 (Ibid , p 235.)

45 Banerjea, S N op cit p 198

How the advancing tide of nationalism facilitated social advancement can be best illustrated by a few examples The awakening among women came in modern India says Annie Besant largely due to their wish to save their sons from the materialising results of English education This awoke among them keen sympathy with the movement to make Hinduism an integral part of education This was the first movement to arouse among them in all parts of India a keen and living interest in the cause of their progress Th troubles of Indians outside India roused the sympathy of Indian women and the attack in South Africa on the sacredness of Indian marriage etc drew large numbers of them out of their homes to protest against the wrong The Partition of Bengal was bitterly resented by Bengali women and was another factor in the outward change When the editor of an extremist newspap r was prosecuted for sedition convicted and sentenced 500 Bengali women went to his mother to show their sympathy by offering congratulations *

* About th s B Pattabhi Sitaramayya the official historian of the Congress says that *Yugantar* edited by Bhupendranath Datta a brother of Swami Vivekananda preached the cult of violence When he was arrested 500 Ben ali women went to con ratulate his mother The son himself declared in court that there were 300 million Editors behind the papers to take his pla e (*The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol 1 p /0)

Another instance of women being greatly influenced by the national upsurge was the courage shown by ladies at the Barisal Conference (April 14 1907) About 300 ladies had come as visitors to the Conference When the Conferen e was not allowed to be held the ladies concerned preferred to return home almost without protection in the burning sun of April rather than wait for carriages

Banerjea S N *A Nation in Making* p ? 6)

How powerful was the impact of national movement upon social life can be inferred from the following remark of S N Banerjea A powerful overmastering impulse soon breaks its prescribed bounds and penetrates into the many sided relations of life It soon be omes a social force Swadeshism during the days of its potency coloured the entire texture of our social and domestic life Marriage presents that included foreign goods the like of which could be manufactured at home were returned Priests would often decline to officiate at ceremonies where foreign articles were offered as oblations to the gods Guests would refuse to participate in festivities where foreign last or foreigns ugar was used

The Indentured Labour question involving the dishonour of women, again moved them deeply, and they even sent a deputation to the Viceroy composed of women. These were the superficial causes But deep in their hearts was the Mother's voice, so thought Annie Besant, calling on them to help her to arise and to be once more mistress in her own household Indian women could not remain indifferent to India's liberty. The strength of the Home Rule movement, opined Mrs Besant, was due to the adhesion of large numbers of women to it. Best recruits and recruiters of the League came from among the women of India Women of Madras marched in procession when their men were prevented from leading procession [46]

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar in his presidential address stressed that the national movement had given a great impetus to education on national lines, which found expression in the schemes of the Hindu and Muslim Universities The national feeling also led to the advocacy of mass education expressed in Gokhale's Elementary Education Bill.[47] Regarding the eternal question of the differences between Hindus and Mohammedans posed a difficulty. Babu Ambica Charan Mazumdar said in his presidential address in 1916 that the game had been nearly played out, and Hindus and Mohammedans had practically solved the question, and were drawing close towards each other [48]

This growing social consciousness was an indication of growing nationalism, which was an eye-sore to the bureaucrats The Punjab officials aimed a blow at the union between the Hindus and Muslims This growing fraternization between the two communities and the expression of fellowship in a common trouble were treated by the Punjab Officials as heinous crimes amonting to open rebellion and waging war against the King Thus a new offence was notified which was defined as

46 Congress Presidential Addresses, Vol II (1911-1934), pp 327-329

47. Ibid , p 48

48 Ibid , p 269

Congress having watched with interest and sympathy the exertions that are being made in England for the total abrogation of laws and rules relating to the regulation of prostitution by the State in India, places on record its appreciation of the services thus rendered to this country, and its desire to co operate by all means in its power in the attainment of this laudable object[55] *Resolution IV at the fifth* Congress again stressed That this Congress hereby tenders its sincere thanks to Messrs Gaine and Smith and the members who voted with them in connection with the debate on the Indian Excise Question in the House of *Commons, and while fully* appreciating what has been done by some of the local Governments towards the improvement of *their systems of Excise and Abkari, desires to express the earnest* hope that no further time may be lost in giving full effect to the *Resolution of the House of Commons*[56]

In 1890 the Congress expressed its pleasure at the increase *in the import duty on spirits, the taxation imposed upon Indian* brewed malt liquors the decision of the Bengal Government to *abolish the outstill system and the closing of over 7 000 liquor* shops by the Madras Government in 1889 1890 Thereafter for a *decade the Congress did not revert to the question of temper* ance It was only in 1900 that the Congress attributed the *growing consumption of liquors* to their cheap supply and appealed to Government to pass measures like the Maine *Liquor Law of* America and Sir Wilfrid Lawsons Permissive Bill or the Local Option Act and impose an additional tax upon intoxicants not intended to be used as medicine [57]

Another subject relating to Social Reform was the eradication of State regulated prostitution Government used to procure women for soldiers both when they were in camps as well as when they were on the march The Allahabad session of the Congress (1888) offered co operation with India s benefactors in England who were working for the total abrogation

55 Ibid p 75
56 Ibid p 92
57 Sitaramayya B P *The History of the Indian National Congress* Vol I p 51

of laws and rules relating to the regulation of prostitution by the State in India." Captain Banon in a forceful speech moved the resolution and it was seconded by Captain Hearsay, who pointed out that over 2,000 Indian Women were procured by Government for the immoral purpose and that this provision encouraged the boy soldiers to loose living [58]

At the eighth Congress again Resolution XIV was passed protesting against prostitution, "That this Congress is thankful that the House of Commons is vigilant in regard to the recent purity legislation by the Government in India, and desires, once again, to enter its protest against all State-regulated immorality in India."[59]

Successive Congress Presidents also continued to lay stress on matters of social reform, and declare that all-round progress of the nation was impossible without the eradication of social evils. Thus Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar in his Presidential address to the Congress (1911) wondered where Indians stood in the scale of civilization when they had only four women and eighteen men per thousand who were literate, where millions of their countrymen were looked down upon as untouchables; when they had about a hundred thousand widows of less than five years and caste rules still forbade sea-voyages. Mr. Basu's Special Marriage Bill was condemned as a dangerous innovation. There was lack of Hindu-Muslim understanding This was the condition to which India had been brought by centuries of decay and degradation, Mr Dar went on, and to talk of a National Government for India under such circumstances would be to make Indians the laughing-stock of the civilised world He exhorted the people to agitate for political rights by all means, but warned them not to forget that the true salvation of India lay in the amelioration of her social and moral condition[60].

Mr. R N. Mudholkar said as much in his presidential

58 Ibid, p 51

59 Besant, Annie, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p 160.

60 Congress Presidential Addresses, Vol II (1911-1934), p 56

address (1912) when he declared that so long as the masses remained steeped in ignorance and the depressed classes were regarded as *untouchable so long as the mothers of families* and the mistresses of households were kept without knowledge in the seclusion of the *purdah*, and were not capable of participating in intellectual pursuits or public matters so long as class was divided against class caste against caste race against race and clannishness and sectional selfishness swayed the actions of the members of the different communities so long as true brotherly feeling and devotion to duty did not become the main guiding principles of the Indian life, so long their aspirations would remain mere dreams [61]

We thus see that even from the Congress platform importance of social reform was preached, if the issue was not forced and precipitated it was for the sake of unity

Dr Hira Lal Singh also disagrees with the tendency among writers on the national movement to connect it with the religious and social movements in the nineteenth century which in their view created an atmosphere of national consciousness from which the Congress derived much inspiration This view Dr Singh asserts ignores the unadulterated political character of the Congress and the part played by the non Indian leaders—Hume Wedderburn and others—of the Congress [62] So far as the first point is concerned it is only proper to repeat the view of the official historian of the Congress that though the Congress had its political objective it was also the organ and exponent of a national renaissance [63] The second point also does not seem to stand scrutiny Because certain non Indians were associated with the early Congress therefore the Congress derived no inspiration from the national consciousness fostered by the fore going religio social movement—sounds unconvincing and absurd Friendly and sympathetic Englishmen were interested not only in our political progress but even more in our social

61 Ibid p 111
62 Singh Dr Hira Lal op cit p 214
63 Sitaramayya B P op cit p 11

the liberal tradition in Europe, but the nationalists were impatient of western cultural dominance and accordingly advocated reform on national lines demanded national education both for boys and girls advocated the progress of women in keeping with the spirit of ancient India and laid stress on the high social idealism as exhibited in India s past But just as the different schools of Indian patriots furthered the cause of Indian independence in their own ways and with all sincerity, so also the social reformers of all shades of thought encouraged social reform along the lines they thought best Towards the close of the second decade of the twentieth century however new trends appear in our national movement and the colossal personality of Mahatma Gandhi dominates the whole Indian scene All the trends of our national life converge on one point and Mahatma Gandhi who stood for the total emancipation of both the individual and society from all kinds of shackles emerges forth as the champion of political emancipation as well as and no less than social regeneration Under his dynamic leadership the stain of national humiliation and social degeneration is washed away from the face of India

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